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Washington Square.*

xxv.



night she disembarked, the girl was closeted for a long time before either lady retired to rest.

"I have seen a great deal of him," said Mrs. Penniman. "He is not very easy to know. I suppose you think you know him; but you

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don't, my dear. You will some day ; but it will only be after you have lived with him. I may almost say *I* have lived with him," Mrs. Penniman proceeded, while Catherine stared. "I think I know him now ; I have had such remarkable opportunities. You will have the same—or rather, you will have better!" and Aunt Lavinia smiled. "Then you will see what I mean. It's a wonderful character, full of passion and energy, and just as true!"

Catherine listened with a mixture of interest and apprehension. Aunt Lavinia was intensely sympathetic, and Catherine, for the past year, while she wandered through foreign galleries and churches, and rolled over the smoothness of posting roads, nursing the thoughts that never passed her lips, had often longed for the company of some intelligent person of her own sex. To tell her story to some kind woman—at moments it seemed to her that this would give her comfort, and she had more than once been on the point of taking the landlady, or the nice young person from the dressmaker's, into her confidence. If a woman had been near her she would on certain occasions have treated such a companion to a fit of weeping ; and she had an apprehension that, on her return, this would form her response to Aunt Lavinia's first embrace. In fact, however, the two ladies had met, in Washington Square, without tears, and when they found themselves alone together a certain dryness fell upon the girl's emotion. It came over her with a greater force than Mrs. Penniman had enjoyed a whole year of her lover's society, and it was not a pleasure to her to hear her aunt explain and interpret the young man, speaking of him as if her own knowledge of him were supreme. It was not that Catherine was jealous ; but her sense of Mrs. Penniman's innocent falsity, which had lain dormant, began to haunt her again, and she was glad that she was safely at home. With this, however, it was a blessing to be able to talk of Morris, to sound his name, to be with a person who was not unjust to him.

"You have been very kind to him," said Catherine. "He has written me that, often. I shall never forget that, Aunt Lavinia."

"I have done what I could ; it has been very little. To let him come and talk to me, and give him his cup of tea—that was all. Your Aunt Almond thought it was too much, and used to scold me terribly ; but she promised me, at least, not to betray me."

"To betray you ?"

"Not to tell your father. He used to sit in your father's study !" said Mrs. Penniman, with a little laugh.

Catherine was silent a moment. This idea was disagreeable to her, and she was reminded again, with pain, of her aunt's secretive habits. Morris, the reader may be informed, had had the tact not to tell her that he sat in her father's study. He had known her but for a few months, and her aunt had known her for fifteen years ; and yet he would not have made the mistake of thinking that Catherine would see the joke of the thing. "I am sorry you made him go into father's room," she said, after a while,

"I didn't send him; he went himself. He liked to look at the books, and at all those things in the glass cases. He knows all about them; he knows all about everything."

Catherine was silent again; then, "I wish he had found some employment," she said.

"He has found some employment! It's beautiful news, and he told me to tell you as soon as you arrived. He has gone into partnership with a commission-merchant. It was all settled, quite suddenly, a week ago."

This seemed to Catherine indeed beautiful news; it had a fine prosperous air. "Oh, I'm so glad!" she said; and now, for a moment, she was disposed to throw herself on Aunt Lavinia's neck.

"It's much better than being under some one; and he has never been used to that," Mrs. Penniman went on. "He is just as good as his partner—they are perfectly equal! You see how right he was to wait. I should like to know what your father can say now! They have got an office in Duane Street, and little printed cards; he brought me one to show me. I have got it in my room, and you shall see it to-morrow. That's what he said to me the last time he was here—'You see how right I was to wait!' He has got other people under him, instead of being a subordinate. He could never be a subordinate; I have often told him I could never think of him in that way."

Catherine assented to this proposition, and was very happy to know that Morris was his own master; but she was deprived of the satisfaction of thinking that she might communicate this news in triumph to her father. Her father would care equally little whether Morris were established in business or transported for life. Her trunks had been brought into her room, and further reference to her lover was for a short time suspended, while she opened them and displayed to her aunt some of the spoils of foreign travel. These were rich and abundant; and Catherine had brought home a present to every one—to every one save Morris, to whom she had brought simply her undiverted heart. To Mrs. Penniman she had been lavishly generous, and Aunt Lavinia spent half an hour in unfolding and folding again, with little ejaculations of gratitude and taste. She marched about for some time in a splendid cashmere shawl, which Catherine had begged her to accept, settling it on her shoulders, and twisting down her head to see how low the point descended behind.

"I shall regard it only as a loan," she said. "I will leave it to you again when I die; or rather," she added, kissing her niece again, "I will leave it to your first-born little girl!" And draped in her shawl, she stood there smiling.

"You had better wait till she comes," said Catherine.

"I don't like the way you say that," Mrs. Penniman rejoined, in a moment. "Catherine, are you changed?"

"No; I am the same."

"You have not swerved a line?"

"I am exactly the same," Catherine repeated, wishing her aunt were a little less sympathetic.

"Well, I am glad!" and Mrs. Penniman surveyed her cashmere in the glass. Then, "How is your father?" she asked in a moment, with her eyes on her niece. "Your letters were so meagre—I could never tell!"

"Father is very well."

"Ah, you know what I mean," said Mrs. Penniman, with a dignity to which the cashmere gave a richer effect. "Is he still implacable?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Quite unchanged?"

"He is, if possible, more firm."

Mrs. Penniman took off her great shawl, and slowly folded it up. "That is very bad. You had no success with your little project?"

"What little project?"

"Morris told me all about it. The idea of turning the tables on him, in Europe; of watching him, when he was agreeably impressed by some celebrated sight—he pretends to be so artistic, you know—and then just pleading with him and bringing him round."

"I never tried it. It was Morris's idea; but if he had been with us, in Europe, he would have seen that father was never impressed in that way. He is artistic—tremendously artistic; but the more celebrated places we visited, and the more he admired them, the less use it would have been to plead with him. They seemed only to make him more determined—more terrible," said poor Catherine. "I shall never bring him round, and I expect nothing now."

"Well, I must say," Mrs. Penniman answered, "I never supposed you were going to give it up."

"I have given it up. I don't care now."

"You have grown very brave," said Mrs. Penniman, with a short laugh. "I didn't advise you to sacrifice your property."

"Yes, I am braver than I was. You asked me if I had changed; I have changed in that way. Oh," the girl went on, "I have changed very much. And it isn't my property. If he doesn't care for it, why should I?"

Mrs. Penniman hesitated. "Perhaps he does care for it."

"He cares for it for my sake, because he doesn't want to injure me. But he will know—he knows already—how little he need be afraid about that. Besides," said Catherine, "I have got plenty of money of my own. We shall be very well off; and now hasn't he got his business? I am delighted about that business." She went on talking, showing a good deal of excitement as she proceeded. Her aunt had never seen her with just this manner, and Mrs. Penniman, observing her, set it down to foreign travel, which had made her more positive, more mature. She thought also that Catherine had improved in appearance; she looked rather handsome. Mrs. Penniman wondered whether Morris

Townsend would be struck with that. While she was engaged in this speculation, Catherine broke out, with a certain sharpness, "Why are you so contradictory, Aunt Penniman? You seem to think one thing at one time, and another at another. A year ago, before I went away, you wished me not to mind about displeasing father; and now you seem to recommend me to take another line. You change about so."

This attack was unexpected, for Mrs. Penniman was not used, in any discussion, to seeing the war carried into her own country—possibly because the enemy generally had doubts of finding subsistence there. To her own consciousness, the flowery fields of her reason had rarely been ravaged by a hostile force. It was perhaps on this account that in defending them she was majestic rather than agile.

"I don't know what you accuse me of, save of being too deeply interested in your happiness. It is the first time I have been told I am capricious. That fault is not what I am usually reproached with."

"You were angry last year that I wouldn't marry immediately, and now you talk about my winning my father over. You told me it would serve him right if he should take me to Europe for nothing. Well, he has taken me for nothing, and you ought to be satisfied. Nothing is changed—nothing but my feeling about father. I don't mind nearly so much now. I have been as good as I could, but he doesn't care. Now I don't care either. I don't know whether I have grown bad; perhaps I have. But I don't care for that. I have come home to be married—that's all I know. That ought to please you, unless you have taken up some new idea; you are so strange. You may do as you please; but you must never speak to me again about pleading with father. I shall never plead with him for anything; that is all over. He has put me off. I am come home to be married."

This was a more authoritative speech than she had ever heard on her niece's lips, and Mrs. Penniman was proportionately startled. She was indeed a little awe-struck, and the force of the girl's emotion and resolution left her nothing to reply. She was easily frightened, and she always carried off her discomfiture by a concession; a concession which was often accompanied, as in the present case, by a little nervous laugh.

XXVI.

If she had disturbed her niece's temper—she began from this moment forward to talk a good deal about Catherine's temper, an article which up to that time had never been mentioned in connection with our heroine—Catherine had opportunity, on the morrow, to recover her serenity. Mrs. Penniman had given her a message from Morris Townsend, to the effect that he would come and welcome her home on the day after her arrival. He came in the afternoon; but, as may be imagined, he was not on this occasion made free of Dr. Sloper's study. He had been coming and going, for the past year, so comfortably and irrespon-

sibly, that he had a certain sense of being wronged by finding himself reminded that he must now limit his horizon to the front parlour, which was Catherine's particular province.

"I am very glad you have come back," he said; "it makes me very happy to see you again." And he looked at her, smiling, from head to foot; though it did not appear, afterwards, that he agreed with Mrs. Penniman (who, womanlike, went more into details) in thinking her embellished.

To Catherine he appeared resplendent; it was some time before she could believe again that this beautiful young man was her own exclusive property. They had a great deal of characteristic lovers' talk—a soft exchange of inquiries and assurances. In these matters Morris had an excellent grace, which flung a picturesque interest even over the account of his début in the commission-business—a subject as to which his companion earnestly questioned him. From time to time he got up from the sofa where they sat together, and walked about the room; after which he came back, smiling and passing his hand through his hair. He was unquiet, as was natural in a young man who has just been re-united to a long-absent mistress, and Catherine made the reflection that she had never seen him so excited. It gave her pleasure, somehow, to note this fact. He asked her questions about her travels, to some of which she was unable to reply, for she had forgotten the names of places and the order of her father's journey. But for the moment she was so happy, so lifted up by the belief that her troubles at last were over, that she forgot to be ashamed of her meagre answers. It seemed to her now that she could marry him without the remnant of a scruple or a single tremor save those that belonged to joy. Without waiting for him to ask, she told him that her father had come back in exactly the same state of mind—that he had not yielded an inch.

"We must not expect it now," she said, "and we must do without it."

Morris sat looking and smiling. "My poor dear girl!" he exclaimed.

"You mustn't pity me," said Catherine; "I don't mind it now—I am used to it."

Morris continued to smile, and then he got up and walked about again. "You had better let me try him!"

"Try to bring him over? You would only make him worse," Catherine answered, resolutely.

"You say that because I managed it so badly before. But I should manage it differently now. I am much wiser; I have had a year to think of it. I have more tact."

"Is that what you have been thinking of for a year?"

"Much of the time. You see, the idea sticks in my crop. I don't like to be beaten."

"How are you beaten if we marry?"

"Of course, I am not beaten on the main issue; but I am, don't you

see, on all the rest of it—on the question of my reputation, of my relations with your father, of my relations with my own children, if we should have any."

"We shall have enough for our children—we shall have enough for everything. Don't you expect to succeed in business?"

"Brilliantly, and we shall certainly be very comfortable. But it isn't of the mere material comfort I speak; it is of the moral comfort," said Morris—"of the intellectual satisfaction!"

"I have great moral comfort now," Catherine declared, very simply.

"Of course you have. But with me it is different. I have staked my pride on proving to your father that he is wrong; and now that I am at the head of a flourishing business, I can deal with him as an equal. I have a capital plan—do let me go at him!"

He stood before her with his bright face, his jaunty air, his hands in his pockets; and she got up, with her eyes resting on his own. "Please don't, Morris; please don't," she said; and there was a certain mild, sad firmness in her tone which he heard for the first time. "We must ask no favours of him—we must ask nothing more. He won't relent, and nothing good will come of it. I know it now—I have a very good reason."

"And pray what is your reason?"

She hesitated to bring it out, but at last it came. "He is not very fond of me!"

"Oh, bother!" cried Morris, angrily.

"I wouldn't say such a thing without being sure. I saw it, I felt it, in England, just before he came away. He talked to me one night—the last night; and then it came over me. You can tell when a person feels that way. I wouldn't accuse him if he hadn't made me feel that way. I don't accuse him; I just tell you that that's how it is. He can't help it; we can't govern our affections. Do I govern mine? mightn't he say that to me? It's because he is so fond of my mother, whom we lost so long ago. She was beautiful, and very, very brilliant; he is always thinking of her. I am not at all like her; Aunt Penniman has told me that. Of course it isn't my fault; but neither is it his fault. All I mean is, it's true; and it's a stronger reason for his never being reconciled than simply his dislike for you."

"'Simply'?" cried Morris, with a laugh. "I am much obliged for that!"

"I don't mind about his disliking you now; I mind everything less. I feel differently; I feel separated from my father."

"Upon my word," said Morris, "you are a queer family!"

"Don't say that—don't say anything unkind," the girl entreated. "You must be very kind to me now, because, Morris—because," and she hesitated a moment—"because I have done a great deal for you."

"Oh, I know that, my dear!"

She had spoken up to this moment without vehemence or outward sign of emotion, gently, reasonably, only trying to explain. But her

emotion had been ineffectually smothered, and it betrayed itself at last in the trembling of her voice. "It is a great thing to be separated like that from your father, when you have worshipped him before. It has made me very unhappy; or it would have made me so if I didn't love you. You can tell when a person speaks to you as if—as if—"

"As if what?"

"As if they despised you!" said Catherine, passionately. "He spoke that way the night before we sailed. It wasn't much, but it was enough, and I thought of it on the voyage, all the time. Then I made up my mind. I will never ask him for anything again, or expect anything from him. It would not be natural now. We must be very happy together, and we must not seem to depend upon his forgiveness. And Morris, Morris, you must never despise me!"

This was an easy promise to make, and Morris made it with fine effect. But for the moment he undertook nothing more onerous.

XXVII.

The Doctor, of course, on his return, had a good deal of talk with his sisters. He was at no great pains to narrate his travels or to communicate his impressions of distant lands to Mrs. Penniman, upon whom he contented himself with bestowing a memento of his enviable experience, in the shape of a velvet gown. But he conversed with her at some length about matters nearer home, and lost no time in assuring her that he was still an inflexible father.

"I have no doubt you have seen a great deal of Mr. Townsend, and done your best to console him for Catherine's absence," he said. "I don't ask you, and you needn't deny it. I wouldn't put the question to you for the world, and expose you to the inconvenience of having to—a—ex-cogitate an answer. No one has betrayed you, and there has been no spy upon your proceedings. Elizabeth has told no tales, and has never mentioned you except to praise your good looks and good spirits. The thing is simply an inference of my own—an induction, as the philosophers say. It seems to me likely that you would have offered an asylum to an interesting sufferer. Mr. Townsend has been a good deal in the house; there is something in the house that tells me so. We doctors, you know, end by acquiring fine perceptions, and it is impressed upon my sensorium that he has sat in these chairs, in a very easy attitude, and warmed himself at that fire. I don't grudge him the comfort of it; it is the only one he will ever enjoy at my expense. It seems likely, indeed, that I shall be able to economise at his own. I don't know what you may have said to him, or what you may say hereafter; but I should like you to know that if you have encouraged him to believe that he will gain anything by hanging on, or that I have budged a hair's breadth from the position I took up a year ago, you have played him a trick for which he may exact reparation. I'm not sure that he may not bring a

suit against you. Of course you have done it conscientiously ; you have made yourself believe that I can be tired out. This is the most baseless hallucination that ever visited the brain of a genial optimist. I am not in the least tired ; I am as fresh as when I started ; I am good for fifty years yet. Catherine appears not to have budged an inch either ; she is equally fresh ; so we are about where we were before. This, however, you know as well as I. What I wish is simply to give you notice of my own state of mind ! Take it to heart, dear Lavinia. Beware of the just resentment of a deluded fortune-hunter ! ”

“ I can’t say I expected it, ” said Mrs. Penniman. “ And I had a sort of foolish hope that you would come home without that odious ironical tone with which you treat the most sacred subjects.”

“ Don’t undervalue irony, it is often of great use. It is not, however, always necessary, and I will show you how gracefully I can lay it aside. I should like to know whether you think Morris Townsend will hang on.”

“ I will answer you with your own weapons, ” said Mrs. Penniman. “ You had better wait and see ! ”

“ Do you call such a speech as that one of my own weapons ? I never said anything so rough.”

“ He will hang on long enough to make you very uncomfortable, then.”

“ My dear Lavinia, ” exclaimed the Doctor, “ do you call that irony ? I call it pugilism.”

Mrs. Penniman, however, in spite of her pugilism, was a good deal frightened, and she took counsel of her fears. Her brother meanwhile took counsel, with many reservations, of Mrs. Almond, to whom he was no less generous than to Lavinia, and a good deal more communicative.

“ I suppose she has had him there all the while, ” he said. “ I must look into the state of my wine ! You needn’t mind telling me now ; I have already said all I mean to say to her on the subject.”

“ I believe he was in the house a good deal, ” Mrs. Almond answered. “ But you must admit that your leaving Lavinia quite alone was a great change for her, and that it was natural she should want some society.”

“ I do admit that, and that is why I shall make no row about the wine ; I shall set it down as compensation to Lavinia. She is capable of telling me that she drank it all herself. Think of the inconceivable bad taste, in the circumstances, of that fellow making free with the house — or coming there at all ! If that doesn’t describe him, he is indescribable.”

“ His plan is to get what he can. Lavinia will have supported him for a year, ” said Mrs. Almond. “ It’s so much gained.”

“ She will have to support him for the rest of his life, then ! ” cried the Doctor. “ But without wine, as they say at the *tables d’hôte*. ”

“ Catherine tells me he has set up a business, and is making a great deal of money.”

The Doctor stared. "She has not told me that—and Lavinia didn't deign. Ah!" he cried, "Catherine has given me up. Not that it matters, for all that the business amounts to."

"She has not given up Mr. Townsend," said Mrs. Almond. "I saw that in the first half-minute. She has come home exactly the same."

"Exactly the same; not a grain more intelligent. She didn't notice a stick or a stone all the while we were away—not a picture nor a view, not a statue nor a cathedral."

"How could she notice? She had other things to think of; they are never for an instant out of her mind. She touches me very much."

"She would touch me if she didn't irritate me. That's the effect she has upon me now. I have tried everything upon her; I really have been quite merciless. But it is of no use whatever; she is absolutely *glued*. I have passed, in consequence, into the exasperated stage. At first I had a good deal of a certain genial curiosity about it; I wanted to see if she really would stick. But, good Lord, one's curiosity is satisfied! I see she is capable of it, and now she can let go."

"She will never let go," said Mrs. Almond.

"Take care, or you will exasperate me too. If she doesn't let go, she will be shaken off—sent tumbling into the dust! That's a nice position for my daughter. She can't see that if you are going to be pushed you had better jump. And then she will complain of her bruises."

"She will never complain," said Mrs. Almond.

"That I shall object to even more. But the deuce will be that I can't prevent anything."

"If she is to have a fall," said Mrs. Almond, with a gentle laugh, "we must spread as many carpets as we can." And she carried out this idea by showing a great deal of motherly kindness to the girl.

Mrs. Penniman immediately wrote to Morris Townsend. The intimacy between these two was by this time consummate, but I must content myself with noting but a few of its features. Mrs. Penniman's own share in it was a singular sentiment, which might have been misinterpreted, but which in itself was not discreditable to the poor lady. It was a romantic interest in this attractive and unfortunate young man, and yet it was not such an interest as Catherine might have been jealous of. Mrs. Penniman had not a particle of jealousy of her niece. For herself, she felt as if she were Morris's mother or sister—a mother or sister of an emotional temperament—and she had an absorbing desire to make him comfortable and happy. She had striven to do so during the year that her brother left her an open field, and her efforts had been attended with the success that has been pointed out. She had never had a child of her own, and Catherine, whom she had done her best to invest with the importance that would naturally belong to a youthful Penniman, had only partly rewarded her zeal. Catherine, as an object of affection and solicitude, had never had that picturesque charm which (as it seemed

to her) would have been a natural attribute of her own progeny. Even the maternal passion in Mrs. Penniman would have been romantic and factitious, and Catherine was not constituted to inspire a romantic passion. Mrs. Penniman was as fond of her as ever, but she had grown to feel that with Catherine she lacked opportunity. Sentimentally speaking, therefore, she had (though she had not disinherited her niece) adopted Morris Townsend, who gave her opportunity in abundance. She would have been very happy to have a handsome and tyrannical son, and would have taken an extreme interest in his love-affairs. This was the light in which she had come to regard Morris, who had conciliated her at first, and made his impression by his delicate and calculated deference—a sort of exhibition to which Mrs. Penniman was particularly sensitive. He had largely abated his deference afterwards, for he economised his resources, but the impression was made, and the young man's very brutality came to have a sort of filial value. If Mrs. Penniman had had a son, she would probably have been afraid of him, and at this stage of our narrative she was certainly afraid of Morris Townsend. This was one of the results of his domestication in Washington Square. He took his ease with her—as, for that matter, he would certainly have done with his own mother.

XXVIII.

The letter was a word of warning ; it informed him that the Doctor had come home more impracticable than ever. She might have reflected that Catherine would supply him with all the information he needed on this point ; but we know that Mrs. Penniman's reflections were rarely just ; and, moreover, she felt that it was not for her to depend on what Catherine might do. She was to do her duty, quite irrespective of Catherine. I have said that her young friend took his ease with her, and it is an illustration of the fact that he made no answer to her letter. He took note of it, amply ; but he lighted his cigar with it, and he waited, in tranquil confidence that he should receive another. "His state of mind really freezes my blood," Mrs. Penniman had written, alluding to her brother ; and it would have seemed that upon this statement she could hardly improve. Nevertheless, she wrote again, expressing herself with the aid of a different figure. "His hatred of you burns with a lurid flame—the flame that never dies," she wrote. "But it doesn't light up the darkness of your future. If my affection could do so, all the years of your life would be an eternal sunshine. I can extract nothing from C. ; she is so terribly secretive, like her father. She seems to expect to be married very soon, and has evidently made preparations in Europe—quantities of clothing, ten pairs of shoes, &c. My dear friend, you cannot set up in married life simply with a few pairs of shoes, can you ? Tell me what you think of this. I am intensely anxious to see you ; I have so much to say. I miss you dreadfully ; the

house seems so empty without you. What is the news down town? Is the business extending? That dear little business—I think it's so brave of you! Couldn't I come to your office?—just for three minutes? I might pass for a customer—is that what you call them? I might come in to buy something—some shares or some railroad things. *Tell me what you think of this plan.* I would carry a little reticule, like a woman of the people."

In spite of the suggestion about the reticule, Morris appeared to think poorly of the plan, for he gave Mrs. Penniman no encouragement whatever to visit his office, which he had already represented to her as a place peculiarly and unnaturally difficult to find. But as she persisted in desiring an interview—up to the last, after months of intimate colloquy, she called these meetings "interviews"—he agreed that they should take a walk together, and was even kind enough to leave his office for this purpose, during the hours at which business might have been supposed to be liveliest. It was no surprise to him, when they met at a street-corner, in a region of empty lots and undeveloped pavements (Mrs. Penniman being attired as much as possible like a "woman of the people"), to find that, in spite of her urgency, what she chiefly had to convey to him was the assurance of her sympathy. Of such assurances, however, he had already a voluminous collection, and it would not have been worth his while to forsake a fruitful avocation merely to hear Mrs. Penniman say, for the thousandth time, that she had made his cause her own. Morris had something of his own to say. It was not an easy thing to bring out, and while he turned it over the difficulty made him acrimonious.

"Oh yes, I know perfectly that he combines the properties of a lump of ice and a red-hot coal," he observed. "Catherine has made it thoroughly clear, and you have told me so till I am sick of it. You needn't tell me again; I am perfectly satisfied. He will never give us a penny; I regard that as mathematically proved."

Mrs. Penniman at this point had an inspiration.

"Couldn't you bring a lawsuit against him?" She wondered that this simple expedient had never occurred to her before.

"I will bring a lawsuit against *you*," said Morris, "if you ask me any more such aggravating questions. A man should know when he is beaten," he added, in a moment. "I must give her up!"

Mrs. Penniman received this declaration in silence, though it made her heart beat a little. It found her by no means unprepared, for she had accustomed herself to the thought that, if Morris should decidedly not be able to get her brother's money, it would not do for him to marry Catherine without it. "It would not do" was a vague way of putting the thing; but Mrs. Penniman's natural affection completed the idea, which, though it had not as yet been so crudely expressed between them as in the form that Morris had just given it, had nevertheless been implied so often, in certain easy intervals of talk, as he sat stretching his

legs in the Doctor's well-stuffed arm-chairs, that she had grown first to regard it with an emotion which she flattered herself was philosophic, and then to have a secret tenderness for it. The fact that she kept her tenderness secret proved of course that she was ashamed of it; but she managed to blink her shame by reminding herself that she was, after all, the official protector of her niece's marriage. Her logic would scarcely have passed muster with the Doctor. In the first place, Morris *must* get the money, and she would help him to it. In the second, it was plain it would never come to him, and it would be a grievous pity he should marry without it—a young man who might so easily find something better. After her brother had delivered himself, on his return from Europe, of that incisive little address that has been quoted, Morris's cause seemed so hopeless that Mrs. Penniman fixed her attention exclusively upon the latter branch of her argument. If Morris had been her son, she would certainly have sacrificed Catherine to a superior conception of his future; and to be ready to do so as the case stood was therefore even a finer degree of devotion. Nevertheless, it checked her breath a little to have the sacrificial knife, as it were, suddenly thrust into her hand.

Morris walked along a moment, and then he repeated, harshly—

“I must give her up !”

“I think I understand you,” said Mrs. Penniman, gently.

“I certainly say it distinctly enough—brutally and vulgarly enough.”

He was ashamed of himself, and his shame was uncomfortable; and as he was extremely intolerant of discomfort, he felt vicious and cruel. He wanted to abuse somebody, and he began, cautiously—for he was always cautious—with himself.

“Couldn't you take her down a little ?” he asked.

“Take her down ?”

“Prepare her—try and ease me off.”

Mrs. Penniman stopped, looking at him very solemnly.

“My poor Morris, do you know how much she loves you ?”

“No, I don't. I don't want to know. I have always tried to keep from knowing. It would be too painful.”

“She will suffer much,” said Mrs. Penniman.

“You must console her. If you are as good a friend to me as you pretend to be, you will manage it.”

Mrs. Penniman shook her head, sadly.

“You talk of my ‘pretending’ to like you; but I can't pretend to hate you. I can only tell her I think very highly of you; and how will that console her for losing you ?”

“The Doctor will help you. He will be delighted at the thing being broken off, and, as he is a knowing fellow, he will invent something to comfort her.”

“He will invent a new torture!” cried Mrs. Penniman. “Heaven deliver her from her father's comfort ! It will consist of his crowing over her and saying, ‘I always told you so !’”

Morris coloured a most uncomfortable red.

"If you don't console her any better than you console me, you certainly won't be of much use! It's a damned disagreeable necessity; I feel it extremely, and you ought to make it easy for me."

"I will be your friend for life!" Mrs. Penniman declared.

"Be my friend now!" And Morris walked on.

She went with him; she was almost trembling.

"Should you like me to tell her?" she asked.

"You mustn't tell her, but you can—you can—" And he hesitated, trying to think what Mrs. Penniman could do. "You can explain to her why it is. It's because I can't bring myself to step in between her and her father—to give him the pretext he grasps at so eagerly (it's a hideous sight!) for depriving her of her rights."

Mrs. Penniman felt with remarkable promptitude the charm of this formula.

"That's so like you," she said; "it's so finely felt."

Morris gave his stick an angry swing.

"Oh damnation!" he exclaimed, perversely.

Mrs. Penniman, however, was not discouraged.

"It may turn out better than you think. Catherine is, after all, so very peculiar." And she thought she might take it upon herself to assure him that, whatever happened, the girl would be very quiet—she wouldn't make a noise. They extended their walk, and, while they proceeded, Mrs. Penniman took upon herself other things besides, and ended by having assumed a considerable burden; Morris being ready enough, as may be imagined, to put everything off upon her. But he was not for a single instant the dupe of her blundering alacrity; he knew that of what she promised she was competent to perform but an insignificant fraction, and the more she professed her willingness to serve him, the greater fool he thought her.

"What will you do if you don't marry her?" she ventured to inquire in the course of this conversation.

"Something brilliant," said Morris. "Shouldn't you like me to do something brilliant?"

The idea gave Mrs. Penniman exceeding pleasure.

"I shall feel sadly taken in if you don't."

"I shall have to, to make up for this. This isn't at all brilliant, you know."

Mrs. Penniman mused a little, as if there might be some way of making out that it was; but she had to give up the attempt, and, to carry off the awkwardness of failure, she risked a new inquiry.

"Do you mean—do you mean another marriage?"

Morris greeted this question with a reflection which was hardly the less impudent from being inaudible. "Surely, women are more crude than men!" And then he answered audibly—

"Never in the world!"

Mrs. Penniman felt disappointed and snubbed, and she relieved herself in a little vaguely sarcastic cry. He was certainly perverse.

"I give her up not for another woman, but for a wider career!" Morris announced.

This was very grand; but still Mrs. Penniman, who felt that she had exposed herself, was faintly rancorous.

"Do you mean never to come to see her again?" she asked, with some sharpness.

"Oh no, I shall come again; but what is the use of dragging it out? I have been four times since she came back, and it's terribly awkward work. I can't keep it up indefinitely; she oughtn't to expect that, you know. A woman should never keep a man dangling!" he added, finely.

"Ah, but you must have your last parting!" urged his companion, in whose imagination the idea of last partings occupied a place inferior in dignity only to that of first meetings.

XXIX.

He came again, without managing the last parting; and again and again, without finding that Mrs. Penniman had as yet done much to pave the path of retreat with flowers. It was devilish awkward, as he said, and he felt a lively animosity for Catherine's aunt, who, as he had now quite formed the habit of saying to himself, had dragged him into the mess and was bound in common charity to get him out of it. Mrs. Penniman, to tell the truth, had, in the seclusion of her own apartment—and, I may add, amid the suggestiveness of Catherine's, which wore in those days the appearance of that of a young lady laying out her *trousseau*—Mrs. Penniman had measured her responsibilities, and taken fright at their magnitude. The task of preparing Catherine and easing off Morris presented difficulties which increased in the execution, and even led the impulsive Lavinia to ask herself whether the modification of the young man's original project had been conceived in a happy spirit. A brilliant future, a wider career, a conscience exempt from the reproach of interference between a young lady and her natural rights—these excellent things might be too troublesomely purchased. From Catherine herself Mrs. Penniman received no assistance whatever; the poor girl was apparently without suspicion of her danger. She looked at her lover with eyes of undiminished trust, and though she had less confidence in her aunt than in a young man with whom she had exchanged so many tender vows, she gave her no handle for explaining or confessing. Mrs. Penniman, faltering and wavering, declared Catherine was very stupid, put off the great scene, as she would have called it, from day to day, and wandered about, very uncomfortably, with her unexploded bomb in her hands. Morris's own scenes were very small ones just now; but even these were beyond his strength. He made his visits as brief as

possible, and, while he sat with his mistress, found terribly little to talk about. She was waiting for him, in vulgar parlance, to name the day; and so long as he was unprepared to be explicit on this point, it seemed a mockery to pretend to talk about matters more abstract. She had no airs and no arts; she never attempted to disguise her expectancy. She was waiting on his good pleasure, and would wait modestly and patiently; his hanging back at this supreme time might appear strange, but of course he must have a good reason for it. Catherine would have made a wife of the gentle old-fashioned pattern—regarding reasons as favours and windfalls, but no more expecting one every day than she would have expected a bouquet of camellias. During the period of her engagement, however, a young lady even of the most slender pretensions counts upon more bouquets than at other times; and there was a want of perfume in the air at this moment which at last excited the girl's alarm.

"Are you sick?" she asked of Morris. "You seem so restless, and you look pale."

"I am not at all well," said Morris; and it occurred to him that, if he could only make her pity him enough, he might get off.

"I am afraid you are overworked; you oughtn't to work so much."

"I must do that." And then he added, with a sort of calculated brutality, "I don't want to owe you everything!"

"Ah, how can you say that?"

"I am too proud," said Morris.

"Yes—you are too proud!"

"Well, you must take me as I am," he went on. "You can never change me."

"I don't want to change you," she said, gently. "I will take you as you are!" And she stood looking at him.

"You know people talk tremendously about a man's marrying a rich girl," Morris remarked. "It's excessively disagreeable."

"But I am not rich!" said Catherine.

"You are rich enough to make me talked about!"

"Of course you are talked about. It's an honour!"

"It's an honour I could easily dispense with."

She was on the point of asking him whether it was not a compensation for this annoyance that the poor girl who had the misfortune to bring it upon him, loved him so dearly and believed in him so truly; but she hesitated, thinking that this would perhaps seem an exacting speech, and while she hesitated, he suddenly left her.

The next time he came, however, she brought it out, and she told him again that he was too proud. He repeated that he couldn't change, and this time she felt the impulse to say that with a little effort he might change.

Sometimes he thought that if he could only make a quarrel with her it might help him; but the question was how to quarrel with a young woman who had such treasures of concession. "I suppose you think the

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effort is all on your side!" he broke out. "Don't you believe that I have my own effort to make?"

"It's all yours now," she said. "My effort is finished and done with!"

"Well, mine is not."

"We must bear things together," said Catherine. "That's what we ought to do."

Morris attempted a natural smile. "There are some things which we can't very well bear together—for instance, separation."

"Why do you speak of separation?"

"Ah! you don't like it; I knew you wouldn't!"

"Where are you going, Morris?" she suddenly asked.

He fixed his eye on her a moment, and for a part of that moment she was afraid of it. "Will you promise not to make a scene?"

"A scene!—do I make scenes?"

"All women do!" said Morris, with the tone of large experience.

"I don't. Where are you going?"

"If I should say I was going away on business, should you think it very strange?"

She wondered a moment, gazing at him. "Yes—no. Not if you will take me with you."

"Take you with me—on business?"

"What is your business? Your business is to be with me."

"I don't earn my living with you," said Morris. "Or rather," he cried with a sudden inspiration, "that's just what I do—or what the world says I do!"

This ought perhaps to have been a great stroke, but it miscarried. "Where are you going?" Catherine simply repeated.

"To New Orleans. About buying some cotton."

"I am perfectly willing to go to New Orleans," Catherine said.

"Do you suppose I would take you to a nest of yellow fever?" cried Morris. "Do you suppose I would expose you at such a time as this?"

"If there is yellow fever, why should you go? Morris, you must not go!"

"It is to make six thousand dollars," said Morris. "Do you grudge me that satisfaction?"

"We have no need of six thousand dollars. You think too much about money!"

"You can afford to say that! This is a great chance; we heard of it last night." And he explained to her in what the chance consisted; and told her a long story, going over more than once several of the details, about the remarkable stroke of business which he and his partner had planned between them.

But Catherine's imagination, for reasons best known to herself, absolutely refused to be fired. "If you can go to New Orleans, I can go," she said. "Why shouldn't you catch yellow fever quite as easily as I?"

I am every bit as strong as you, and not in the least afraid of any fever. When we were in Europe, we were in very unhealthy places ; my father used to make me take some pills. I never caught anything, and I never was nervous. What will be the use of six thousand dollars if you die of a fever ? When persons are going to be married, they oughtn't to think so much about business. You shouldn't think about cotton, you should think about me. You can go to New Orleans some other time—there will always be plenty of cotton. It isn't the moment to choose—we have waited too long already." She spoke more forcibly and volubly than he had ever heard her, and she held his arm in her two hands.

" You said you wouldn't make a scene !" cried Morris. " I call this a scene."

" It's you that are making it ! I have never asked you anything before. We have waited too long already." And it was a comfort to her to think that she had hitherto asked so little ; it seemed to make her right to insist the greater now.

Morris bethought himself a little. " Very well, then ; we won't talk about it any more. I will transact my business by letter." And he began to smooth his hat, as if to take leave.

" You won't go ? " And she stood looking up at him.

He could not give up his idea of provoking a quarrel ; it was so much the simplest way ! He bent his eyes on her upturned face, with the darkest frown he could achieve. " You are not discreet. You mustn't bully me ! "

But, as usual, she conceded everything. " No, I am not discreet ; I know I am too pressing. But isn't it natural ? It is only for a moment."

" In a moment you may do a great deal of harm. Try and be calmer the next time I come."

" When will you come ? "

" Do you want to make conditions ? " Morris asked. " I will come next Saturday."

" Come to-morrow," Catherine begged ; " I want you to come to-morrow. I will be very quiet," she added ; and her agitation had by this time become so great that the assurance was not unbecoming. A sudden fear had come over her ; it was like the solid conjunction of a dozen disembodied doubts, and her imagination, at a single bound, had traversed an enormous distance. All her being, for the moment, was centred in the wish to keep him in the room.

Morris bent his head and kissed her forehead. " When you are quiet, you are perfection," he said ; " but when you are violent, you are not in character."

It was Catherine's wish that there should be no violence about her save the beating of her heart, which she could not help ; and she went on, as gently as possible, " Will you promise to come to-morrow ? "

" I said Saturday ! " Morris answered smiling. He tried a frown at one moment, a smile at another ; he was at his wit's end.

"Yes, Saturday too," she answered, trying to smile. "But to-morrow first." He was going to the door, and she went with him, quickly. She leaned her shoulder against it; it seemed to her that she would do anything to keep him.

"If I am prevented from coming to-morrow, you will say I have deceived you!" he said.

"How can you be prevented? You can come if you will."

"I am a busy man—I am not a dangler!" cried Morris, sternly.

His voice was so hard and unnatural that, with a helpless look at him, she turned away; and then he quickly laid his hand on the door-knob. He felt as if he were absolutely running away from her. But in an instant she was close to him again, and murmuring in a tone none the less penetrating for being low, "Morris, you are going to leave me!"

"Yes, for a little while."

"For how long?"

"Till you are reasonable again."

"I shall never be reasonable, in that way!" And she tried to keep him longer; it was almost a struggle. "Think of what I have done!" she broke out. "Morris, I have given up everything!"

"You shall have everything back!"

"You wouldn't say that if you didn't mean something. What is it?—what has happened?—what have I done?—what has changed you?"

"I will write to you—that is better," Morris stammered.

"Ah, you won't come back!" she cried, bursting into tears.

"Dear Catherine," he said, "don't believe that! I promise you that you shall see me again!" And he managed to get away and to close the door behind him.

HENRY JAMES, JR.

Notes on Water-Colour Art.

1

THE EARLY MASTERS.

PROBABLY the greatest difference which would strike an ordinary observer between the works of the founders of the water-colour school and the present workers in that medium would be the comparative absence of bright colour from the earlier work. This was due to two chief causes, both of which it is necessary to bear in mind. The first was the previous use which had been made in art of the medium in question. This use had been wholly subsidiary to the practice of oil-painting. Artists had been accustomed to tint with washes of sepia or Indian ink the rough memoranda made by them either of landscape or figure compositions, both for the sake of preserving the outline and for giving the main effect of light and shade. As time went on, a little more colour gradually crept into these memoranda ; but they were still in principle tinted outlines, more akin to diagrams than pictures, aiming at no effects of solidity and relief, or at strict attention to details of colour. Indeed, previous to our English masters, the art of water-colour painting bore a strong resemblance to the practice of Japanese artists, and, with the exception that it did not ignore anatomical accuracy and the rules of perspective, stood practically upon the same level. Up to the very time of Girtin, water-colour painting could scarcely be considered to represent Nature otherwise than as a map : it was nothing but an outline, more or less accurate, filled in with tints—almost entirely laid on in flat washes—which approximated to Nature in a conventional manner. The step which had been made from the earliest practice was that the light portions of the composition were expressed in colour, and not only left bare as in the earlier days, when the wash was only used for tinting the shadow portions.

It need not be pointed out how an art which had begun in this way, by confining itself to the expression of light and shade, to the exclusion of local tint, would necessarily have to undergo a long apprenticeship before arriving at a thorough comprehensive proficiency in the rendering of the truths of colour, and how likely it would be to exaggerate, at all events for some time, the importance of the facts which it was first engaged in rendering.

The second cause which made water-colour paintings so dull in hue,

at first, was the poor ness of the materials employed. It was not only that the colours were unskilfully and ignorantly prepared, but the paper also was execrable in quality and hue, and could not be depended upon to absorb equally the tints laid upon it. It was not till Messrs. Newman and Whatman devoted themselves respectively to the manufacture of pure colours and paper, that the water-colour artist had a fair chance of giving to his work any beauty of bright colour, and, looking at the pictures executed in this earlier time, it is always necessary to bear in mind the above fact. All this is an old story now. We look at De Wint's picture, and notice where his blues and the fugitive Indian red (employed by this artist in making his greys) have disappeared, leaving the sky frequently almost a blank ; we turn to Turner, and find trees whose foliage retains no trace of its former hue, and rivers (as, for instance, in the beautiful drawing of the meeting of the Greta and the Tees) whose waters have wholly disappeared ; we see whole drawings from which all the colder colours have vanished, leaving a pale buff tint over the whole composition, and we take all these things as a matter of course ; but hardly, I think, appreciate the enormous difficulties which must have been encountered by men working with such imperfect and fleeting materials. Those who noticed the early drawings of Turner exhibited by Mr. Ruskin at the Fine Art Society's rooms last year, will remember how sternly limited they were in colour to tints of buff and pale browns, blues, and greens. Those first drawings carry us back to the old theory of water-colours, which restricted them to the simplest suggestion of natural colours, and show us very plainly how hard a matter it was even for a great colourist like Turner to escape from the traditional restrictions laid upon his art. How he did escape, and work his way upwards till he attained his whole colour strength, we must not stay to notice here ; but it should be remembered that the great improvement in colours and paper came just in time to be useful to him.

The main influence of Turner's work upon later water-colour art has been rather that of a liberator than a lawgiver ; and it is necessary to dwell strongly upon the assertion that, great as this painter was—with a greatness indeed, which, like that of Shakespeare, makes all words of praise seem little better than an impertinence—yet he has founded no school—has had, on the whole, no followers. His services to English art have been tremendous, but rather of the kind which uproots tradition, than that which founds a school ; and I doubt whether any considerable section of English artists are at the present day working upon the same lines as our greatest landscape-painter. The truth is, that while Turner, in one sense, stands at the head of modern art, he, in an almost truer sense, comes at the tail of ancient art ; he closes an epoch almost more than he inauguates one.

Let me try if I can make this plain in a few words. Between modern landscape-painting, depending, as it does in the main, on its truth to nature, and ancient landscape-painting, which depended upon the dignity

of its composition, Turner's work stands alone, belonging to both schools and yet ruled by neither. If we are to seek for dignity of composition, sublimity of conception, and power of execution, it is impossible to find them in a higher degree than in many of Turner's great pictures. If our ideal as a landscape-painter was found before Turner came, in Claude, can we deny that, even in the same way—in classical grace and feeling, in dignity of conception and composition—the painter of the "Hesperides" and the "Bay of Baiae" is greater than the model on whom he formed himself? But if, on the other hand, we find our ideal landscape in truth to Nature, in detail of rock, tree, flower, and cloud—where shall we find, even now, a painter who gives us more of what we want than Turner when he draws "The Frosty Morning," or "Crossing the Brook"? The point I wish to insist on in this connection, is that the one style was apparently as natural to him as the other. He could not paint even the most classical of his compositions without introducing an amount of natural fact which, when we come to study the work, positively bewilders us by its variety and quantity; nor could he paint the simplest subject of English rural life without touching it with some of the classical grace which Claude had taught him. Now, it was a genius of this double-sidedness—at least, so we think we can see now—that was wanted to complete the emancipation of landscape-painting from the old classic ideal. Had Turner been simply a realist, in the way that many landscape-painters are nowadays, the adherents of the older style would have pooh-poohed his pictures as wanting in the "grand style;" had he been simply great in the styles of Claude and Poussin, surrendering almost without an effort many truths of nature as incompatible with the dignity of a great school of landscape, he would simply have retarded the development, instead of hastening it. But as it was, he succeeded in showing, as it were side by side, the two styles, and proving, by the similarity no less than the contrast, where the faults of the elder school lay; and, though no one then could come to much decision as to whether it were possible that Claude's style, of ideal merit, as it had been considered for centuries, was not after all the finest conceivable method of landscape painting, they were forced to acknowledge that here was a painter who did not hesitate to challenge Claude on his own ground, and nevertheless gave in his adherence to a method, in comparison with which Claude's was artificial in the extreme, and produced by that method results which were as beautiful as they were original. I have dwelt thus long upon Turner's curious combination of classicism and naturalism because it seems to me that he prepared by it, in the only way that was at the time possible, the ground for the reaction in favour of the study of Nature, which has been the most typical thing about the landscape of the last half-century. For it must be remembered that if Turner did, as I hold, exhibit the results of the classical and the natural styles of painting side by side, with much of the same grand impartiality with which Shakespeare exhibits the most diverse passions and characters, yet, when once these

results were shown, artists and the public declared with no uncertain voice which it was that they preferred ; and, in somewhat the same way as "Cervantes smiled the chivalry of Spain away," so did classical composition really fade out of men's sight in the glorious pictures of Carthage and Italy, by the side of which the artist did not scruple to hang such everyday subjects as the breaking-up of an old war-ship, or the passing of a railway-train through a storm of wind and rain.

It was a new light to people that commonplace things they had seen all their lives, had in them pictorial elements of pathos and interest such as they had never suspected, and that a painter who had shown himself fully capable of appreciating the glories of ancient landscape, should show himself also content to paint with equal fidelity and love the simplest subjects of English scenery. It was a new light in many ways that shone from his pictures, and men woke up gradually to its comprehension, though many well-meaning persons could not believe at first in a painter who declared that Margate sunsets were the finest in the world. The general artistic feeling of the country would, however, scarcely have taken (as it did take in the earlier years of this century) the direction of giving increased importance to the practice of water-colours, had it not been for another quality of Turner's work, and one which was in this instance shared by several artists less widely known. The pessimist notion of water-colour work which had steadily grown up under the fostering care of its restriction by artists to minor purposes, and by the little care and knowledge bestowed upon the manufacture of its material, required some striking disproof before its error could be generally acknowledged. It was necessary to show that there was no inherent incapacity in the medium to prevent works therein possessing all the force, dignity, and value, which were commonly supposed to be found alone in the schools of oil-painting, and, thanks to what was perhaps his greatest quality, this was shown by Turner and one or two of his *confrères*. If we review carefully Turner's water-colour work, we find in it one supreme characteristic, universally present, and that is the sense of enormous space, which is given apparently without effort, and certainly without straining, in every little sketch, no matter how small. Whether it be English meadows, French rivers, or Alpine ranges which occupy his pencil, however crowded or important be the foreground, however varied or intense the light of the picture, in all alike there opens out to our view, an almost infinite series of aerial planes so exquisitely right in their distance, that after the first glance it is literally true that in looking at a Turner the size of the work is almost an absolute matter of indifference—four inches square gives us the same effect in his work that twelve feet does. Now it should be remembered that of all Claude's merits this was the greatest. Truth to natural colour and detail he habitually sacrificed, truth to atmospheric effect, never. Whatever Mr. Ruskin or any one else may say, Claude, till Turner came, had never been approached in this respect, and when

Turner did come it was in this respect only, to share his throne, not wrest his sceptre. Our English artist, however, showed that it was possible to do in water-colours on a square half-foot of paper, what the great Frenchman had done in oils on a ten-foot canvas. But there was a contemporary of Turner's who also possessed this sense of space and this power of expressing it on a small scale, and whose influence helped that of the greater master to change the aspect of water-colour art; this was David Cox, perhaps the most truly English as he was the greatest of all our water-colour landscape artists.

No subject in connection with the rise of water-colour art is more interesting, or has received less critical attention, than the relation of such men as Cox and De Wint, but especially Cox, to Turner. I cannot here do more than just glance at this connection, for though it is comparatively simple to trace the rise of Turner's genius through study of nature, imitation of great masters, study of nature again and again, and finally its almost complete surrender to the leading of the imaginative faculty, there is in Cox no such progress discernible; his genius seems to have taken from the very first an upward line, for which there can hardly be found any determining impulse; and truths of atmosphere and composition which were reached by Turner in what we may almost call a scientific manner, were grasped naturally by Cox without apparent knowledge, and yet with almost infallible accuracy. I have studied for more years than I care to remember Cox's work, having had the good fortune to live in the same house with a large collection of his drawings, and it is to this day a puzzle to me how the marvellous truth of his distant landscape was reached by the painter. That the power of composition was innate both in him and Turner, I do not doubt, though the latter indubitably studied it to a degree unimagined by the former, but the manner in which plane after plane of atmosphere is indicated by Cox, in work which appears to have been done with lightning speed, and in what I may call the most rough and ready manner, is more inexplicable to my understanding than the utmost marvels of delicacy attained by Turner. I remember especially two sketches, one of an open common under a storm of wind and rain, and the other a still slighter sketch of Putney Bridge on a dull rainy afternoon, both of which possess in the highest degree this quality of almost infinite variety of distance. Now, these rough sketches (for they are sketches untouched at home) are especially good illustrations, because in neither of them is there any object worth speaking of by which the eye is led to appreciate the distance—both have been executed in a great hurry on the spot; the former being done, as I was told by a gentleman who was with Cox at the time, in a very few minutes. (The painter suddenly stopped his companion in the middle of the shower, said, "I *must* have that effect," and sat down and did it.) There are some curious drawings of Cox's earlier years, showing how he fell under the influence first of De Wint and then of Turner; but they throw no special light upon the great

merits of his work, and are, indeed, among the very worst drawings that he produced.

I must not, however, dwell upon this subject ; suffice it to note that here, running as it were parallel to Turner, was an artist whose work possessed qualities of dignity and power comparable to those of the finest oil-painters, and yet one who had somehow arrived at his conclusions without copying the antique or studying the great schools of art, but had simply been taught them by Nature herself as he sat sketching on Mitcham Common, or under the oaks at Haddon Hall. It is necessary to note briefly the advance made by Cox upon the work, very beautiful work, too, in its way, of his immediate predecessor De Wint.

I was talking a few weeks ago to one of the most famous of our contemporary water-colour painters, who had just returned from a visit to Madrid, and while we were chatting incidentally about the enormous power of Velasquez as a colourist, my friend casually said, "There is only one Englishman who ever approached him in that way, and that's De Wint." I quote this remark as a somewhat exaggerated expression of a truth which we are at the present time somewhat likely to forget, namely, that a colourist by nature can work almost entirely without colour ; this is so true, that amongst artists it would probably be not thought worthy of repetition ; but it is habitually forgotten if not denied by the public in general. Now, De Wint was, if not a great colourist, certainly one of no mean order, and in his work was struck that note of relative truth which Cox afterwards followed out so successfully. The former artist had a dislike to bright skies, cheerful scenes, and merry incidents (very unlike Cox's habit of mind) ; he hated a windy day, or indeed anything that told of swift movement and lively action, and what he disliked he did not paint ; but there never yet was a man who painted tired cattle, straggling home down a muddy lane, or standing idly about the farmyard under a heavy sky, as did De Wint ; there has never been an English painter who has given us with equal truth the long flat marshes of Essex, or Cambridge, or who in fact has represented as truly that plain, undramatic, undisturbed, and somewhat stagnant life of rural England. Unemotional of nature, in as high a degree as he is truthful to the narrow truth he had power to see, his pictures are probably more out of tune with our present style of painting and our more restless manner of life than those of any artist of his period. Yet we must consider that he succeeded to a race of artists who thoroughly despised and ignored water-colours as incapable of producing fine art, and that with almost hopelessly inferior materials, he produced works which in their mastery of tertiary tints are unrivalled, and, last not least, that he asserted in his own dull dogged way that his country was "good enough for him as it was ;" he was not going to give way to anybody in that, let them talk about Claude and Poussin as they liked. Something (indeed to me very much) of this spirit is evident in his work, and it is

almost certain that it was from him, and perhaps from William Hunt, that Cox caught the infection which made his work so peculiarly English in its character. The great difference between the spirit of these artists is most certainly the stirring quality of Cox's work, intensely full of life and energy, and the quietude, which is yet not melancholy and not in the least morbid, of De Wint. Their great merit consists in this, that in an age of *Keepsake* literature, and "art chiefly of the hand-screen sort," as George Eliot calls it, they succeeded in giving to their work a dignity and a truth which have never been surpassed in landscape-painting, and that they did this by no reference to classical models, but by sheer power of original genius.

Other painters had shown that there were beauties in English scenery accessible to the artist, but none before had preached with their pencils the daring theory, that England itself, muddy, grey-skied, windy, foggy, and cold, was yet on the whole a beautiful country, one that a man might be proud to live in and proud to paint. If there be such a thing as worthy Jingoism, these old painters were worthy Jingoes, and the contrast is curiously deep between what they and what Turner, who must have had the seer's gift of prophecy, as he certainly had his melancholy, thought of our native land.

These three men, Turner, Cox, and De Wint, were the great precursors in landscape, of the period which the Burlington Fine Art Gallery have chosen for illustration, and with them there should be mentioned Barrett and Prout; the first of whom was the most refined and skilful exponent in water-colours of the classical composition style of landscape, and exceptionally able in depicting effects of brilliant sunlight, the other the most patiently faithful of architectural draughtsmen, yet hardly ever carrying his painting beyond the old standpoint of a pen or pencil outline washed with flat colour. We say hardly ever, for it must be here noted that signs are by no means wanting that had Prout taken to painting seriously instead of devoting his whole life to architectural draughtsmanship, he might have been a considerable colourist. This is especially noticeable in some of his earlier sea-pieces, and in a few finished drawings of his later period.

There is in Prout's work a curious, simple fidelity and innocent earnestness such as one may perhaps find an analogy to in the sermon of a simple country parson, whose hearers ask no troublesome questions, and have no disturbing doubts. In such a mind, to such listeners (apparently), does Prout tell his little tale of Gothic architecture, with a humble and yet confident sense in the sufficiency of its interest. That he (the artist) delights in the story is evident; so, he thinks, should you do, if you would take the trouble, and lest any element which attracted him should be missing, he gives you the people with their carts, fruit-stalls, umbrellas, &c. &c., that he saw in front of the buildings, throws them in as it were to add to the local colour. But on this subject I must say no more, for we have just had from the pen of Mr. Ruskin a

critical notice of Prout's work and his place in art, of such quality as to render further words a mere impertinence, and I can only refer those who are interested in the subject to the "Notes on Prout and Hunt," published a few months ago by the Fine Art Society.

The works of the men I have named, and whose characteristics I have tried to give some slightest glimpse of, were in the main executed before, or shortly after, the year 1830, and it is, as the editor of the *Burlington Catalogue* shows in his preface, the years between 1830 and 1860 which are mainly illustrated in this collection. We have brought water-colour art up to this period as far as it has been concerned with landscape, let us now try and see what use was made by the younger generation of the paths opened to them by the elder artists. Did they, like Jeannot in the old ballad, "go proudly rushing on" where glory pointed the way, or did they retrace their steps, and turn their improved pigments and paper to a less worthy use than in the old days? What was the work of the water-colour school of English painting (as it is shown on these walls) during the second quarter of the nineteenth century?

On the whole the period is one of decided decline—decline which is made the more evident from the skill in many technical respects of those who are engaged in it, and the superior beauty of the materials employed; the further we get away from the old masters, the worse the art becomes (the landscape art alone I am here speaking of), up to 1860, or thereabouts, at which time the pre-Raphaelite influence steps quietly in and stops the decline, by turning the whole aim of the best men's work towards a new object; but of this influence I cannot here speak, and, indeed, must needs be brief in my mention of the period of decline.

If I do not here dwell upon Bonington's work, it is from no feeling of neglect, but only because, owing to his training in the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* at Paris, his subsequent studies in Venice, and his early death at the age of twenty-seven, he can hardly be considered to hold the place of an *English* landscape-painter. In all probability, had he lived he would have been one of our very greatest genre painters, and the studies of landscape and sea-coast scenery which he has left us possess a refinement and delicacy both in the execution, and in the selection and arrangement of the subject, which we can hardly parallel in English painting. He is said to have slighted "the Academic teaching of Gros," received in Paris, but the influence of that teaching is singularly evident in his work, to which perhaps the most correct term to apply is "elegant." Technically he showed signs of becoming a colourist, and his actual brush-work in water-colour was of exceptional brilliancy, but he had no followers in England, and his work has never been valued so highly in this country as in France.

I now come to the two painters who are the most prominent figures of the period of decline, and that not only from their merit, but because they form the connecting links between the old school and the one which was to succeed it; without them we could hardly understand how the

art of Cox and De Wint changed to the art of Rowbotham, Richardson, and Penley. These two painters, William Bennett and William James Muller, were contemporaries, though the latter painter died in 1845, the former not till 1871.

Muller's work presents at first sight a very difficult problem to the student of art, for it is difficult to understand how a painter so highly endowed with artistic gifts could do so very little with them, and this is, I think, only to be accounted for by what is, curiously enough, one of his most marked merits—that is his power of seizing the artistic aspect of any given scene. This it is that makes his work so strongly attractive to artists, and it is the lack of more than this that causes people in general to pass his pictures almost without notice. Taken from one side, he is the exact opposite of Cox, who delighted with a very evident delight in the subjects he painted, whereas Muller, sketching with a facility and accuracy to the general effect hardly to be surpassed, yet always impresses us as being in a hurry to get away from his subject, as not caring one bit *what* he was sketching, and as having no reason why he should sketch that more than anything else. And so it happens that, wonderful as his work is in many technical respects, it strikes no responsive note in our natures, and though the subjects of his pictures extend over Italy, Switzerland, and Germany, Lycia, Greece, and Egypt, yet from all those countries put together, he cannot extract as much beauty or even interest, as we gain from one of Cox's hayfields or De Wint's farmyards.

I am, it must be remembered, speaking here only of his landscape and water-colour work; it is probable that the real bent of his genius was towards figure-painting, and the methods of oil suited him best. His restlessness and his facility for rapid sketching made him, however, always on the search for new subjects, and he undoubtedly had a most pernicious influence upon the art of the day, both by precept and example. He is, after all, best described as an "ideal sketcher;" he set the ideal of sketching as opposed to that of thorough painting from Nature, before his pupils, and corrupted with this doctrine two clever artists who are still living, Mr. Harry Johnson and Mr. George Fripp. His theory was (it is quite perceptible in his works), that, after all, there are only a few natural facts that an artist wants in order to make a picture, that these facts he can get in an hour or two's work on the spot, and that then the picture can be made at leisure as per receipt. We know, or think we know, better than that by this time, but it is not wonderful that a doctrine so bold and so attractive gained ready credence amongst artists; the whole history of the next twenty years of landscape-painting is the history of how this creed was worked, and finally worked out, by a series of average artists. The whole of what may be called chromolithographic art arose from this theory of rapid sketching.

Muller's practice, however, great as was its influence, would not by itself have turned the popular artistic practice in favour of slight and dex-

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terously imperfect renderings of nature. The work was wanting in many of the elements of popularity ; it was powerful, but it was also gloomy ; it was intensely suggestive, but its suggestions were such as could only be followed out by people somewhat acquainted with art matters, and above all, it was too impersonal for popularity. But perhaps its greatest drawback, as far as public approval was concerned, was its lack of propriety. It gave way in no one respect to Mrs. Grundy and her kindred, it was wholly unadapted to Miss Skimperton's or any other academy. Think for one moment of what had just gone before. Turner was teaching us the beauties of sunshine, and Cox those of wind and rain. De Wint was telling us that our England was pictorial even in its most commonplace aspects. Cotman and Bonington had taken the river and the sea-shore as their pet subjects, and shown their fitness for artistic effort ; and lastly Muller was wandering from Dan to Beer-sheba, sketching whatever came in his way. All these men were (each in his own way) discoverers and innovators ; and what was wanted at this special time was an artist of sufficient power to grasp the effect of their various practices, and combine them in some form which should be generally acceptable to the public, which should, as it were, restore the public to that first critical place from which it had been a little deposed. This man was found in a pupil of Cox's named William Bennett, a painter who may be said to have determined the direction of landscape art for at least twenty years. Essentially a painter of the second class, Bennett had still the power of combining in no ordinary degree many high artistic qualities. He had sat at the feet of Cox till he was thoroughly imbued with that artist's love of fresh, breezy landscapes, and the rapidity of genius which had enabled Cox to dash off his work at lightning speed, became with Bennett the object of constant emulation. Cox, partly from choice, partly from the necessities of the time, had worked with a restricted palette, and had obtained his effects by the quickest and most dexterous use of a large brush full of colour dashed with hurried certainty over the roughest paper. Both the restricted palette, the wet brush, and the rough paper became parts of Bennett's artistic creed, as did the elder artists' hatred of body colour and love of grey, breezy skies. It is not too much to say that Bennett's entire practice was founded on the desire to gain rapidity. It was in its very essence partial ; not partial like Cox to one phase of Nature, but partial in a far more enfeebling manner to Nature as a whole. It may be fairly said of Bennett's pictures that they represent accurately a momentary sight of any natural scene, such as a child might have, or a blind man whose eyes were suddenly opened. The first glimpse one has of them is invariably the most pleasing ; the first impulse is to say "How true !" the second to think "How false !" Nothing in the picture is rendered accurately ; not, bear in mind, because the painter confessed his inability for such rendering, nor because he seized all he could grasp in the one given moment in which such fact existed for him, but because the painter did not see that more was to be desired—

did not know his shortcomings—did not in truth really grasp his subject. The work is as little realistic as it is ideal, and stands in much the same relation to great painting as “Hunkey-dorum-diddleum-dey” does to great music. But perhaps even for this very reason it is pleasant to a great many people; it needs no effort to understand, no learning to appreciate. Its subjects, too, are such as we can all take an interest in, such as are not of everyday occurrence to us dwellers in London, but within a practicable distance by road or rail, and connected with memories, legends, or places more or less familiar to us all. Bolton Abbey and Haddon Hall, the cliffs of Hastings or the view from Richmond Hill; girls haymaking in bright sunshine, or children gathering blackberries in shady lanes—everything which recalls sunny days in the country or by the sea-shore, and speaks of cheerfulness, of a decent, properly educated mind, was the material out of which Bennett formed his pictures, and the man himself was such as we might have fancied—

A great broad-shouldered genial Englishman, clumsy in his movements, hearty in his manner, furiously prejudiced and irascible in outward appearance, and yet at heart simple as a child and gentle as a woman. Nothing pleased him better than helping youngsters, and I can remember how as a boy I used to go once a week throughout the winter months to his studio, and there, in company with two or three others, make sepia drawings with the brush (he would allow no pencil to be used), from his sketches, and receive the most kindly, dogmatic and (I am bound to say that I now believe) most erroneous, instruction that I have ever experienced. Untroubled by doubts either in art or life, thoroughly capable of such work as he attempted to perform, imbued with a hearty love of out-door life, and a hatred of all but clear and simple principles, this painter was the last genuine painter of the old school of water-colours. English landscape was to him the finest thing in the world; he loved it deeply if ignorantly, and he painted it with as hearty an appreciation of its more superficial beauties, as has ever been seen.

After him the deluge, as far as the school of pure water-colour was concerned, but on that I cannot dwell here. In a future paper I will try to show how the picturesque ideal of landscape quickly came to usurp the place which had essentially been filled by the work of the artists some of whose peculiarities I have here tried to point out, and how that ideal was in its turn dethroned by the rise of the pre-Raphaelites. From 1830 to 1860 we may consider that the picturesque had it all its own way. From 1860 to the present time the struggle between it and the realists has been both bitter and perhaps doubtful in its issue, but we may, I think, consider ourselves justified in concluding that a modified realism has at last gained the day.

HARRY QUILTER.

Country Parsons.

THE tendency which modern life has to uniformity and suppression of all marked characteristics has frequently been noticed. Among the few elements of picturesqueness, however, which a ruthless civilisation still suffers to linger in England, certainly not the least is the country parson. The type is one and the same, but its expression is manifold. He brings together, as it were, by his own individuality, all ranks of men in his parish, touching the squire or lawyer by reminiscences of school and college life, while his holy profession unites him with the joys and sorrows of his poorer parishioners. Perhaps his farmers do not always sympathise with him ; but then he is in some sort worse than a landlord, as he exacts tithes. Then, again, he possesses too much "book-learning" for them, and, sooth to say, they somewhat despise the farming of his glebe, supposing him to keep it in his own hands. A country parson seldom makes a good farmer, and (if good farmers will let us say it) he is generally considered a fair object to be imposed upon by them when his produce goes to market. It is upon record that one surprised the neighbourhood by the excellence of his crops and their due rotation, but he was always rather behindhand with everything. The churchwarden was deputed to ask him the reason of this, when the rest of his procedure was so creditable in the eyes of the parish. The parson laughed, and confessed he had not the remotest knowledge of farming, but possessed plenty of observation. He therefore took as his pattern one of the largest and best farmers in the parish, and did whatever he noticed this man ordered to be done on his estate. When he sowed beans, then he, the parson, did the same ; when he cut hay, he did so too ; consequently it was not to be wondered at that he was always just a little behindhand. The clergyman rose highly, after this avowal, in the estimation of his flock. This haphazard mode of farming brought him nearer to them than if he had followed the precepts of Stephens and Mech. Nothing pleases the rustic mind so much as knowing all the secrets of successful agriculture.

To realise the blank which the removal of the parson from rural England would occasion, is to foreshadow the extreme result of Disestablishment and Disendowment. Without entering here upon this wide question in its political and ecclesiastical bearings, it is tolerably certain that were so sweeping a measure carried out, the Church would be obliged in great measure to fall back upon the teeming centres of population, and would flourish among them with renewed strength,

while the sad spectacle of retrogression would be exhibited in many country parishes. In poor and sequestered districts it can scarcely be doubted that civilisation in its highest aspects would be blighted, and in some places die out altogether for a time. Neither clergy nor sacred buildings could be maintained; so that the example of the one, and the many silent but eloquent influences of the other, would be lost. Here, again, it is not our purpose to speak of the divine and deeper benefits which a parish receives, or may receive, from a resident parish priest; but the extinction of that idyllic English life which flourishes in and around country rectories, so picturesquely and so profitably withal, cannot but be regarded as a national calamity. An important factor in the efforts made at present to diffuse goodness, light, and sweetness would require to be eliminated from the philanthropist's calculations, while the attractiveness of country life would be greatly diminished. In all the thousand little kindly acts which are unconsciously rendered and accepted, and make up so much of the pleasure of rural life, in the ever-recurring routine of parochial management, in social gatherings, at friendly dinner parties, no face would be so missed as that of the parson. Without his presence the warm colours in which poets and essayists have always painted life at each scattered Auburn, would fade out, and a dull uniformity creep over the landscape. To take but the lowest ground, there would be a grievous diminution of cakes and ale in merrie England; while amid the many depressing and earthward tendencies which always prevail in country districts, the loss of a powerful counter-acting element which affects both heart and head, and strives to point the way to "a better country, which is an heavenly," if it always seemed to itself to fall short of its own ideal, could ill be spared.

This many-sidedness, so to speak, of the country parson's character has frequently been dwelt upon with approbation by poets and moralists. He must be, in the best sense of the phrase, all things to all men. Divine, scholar, farmer, naturalist, sportsman, with warm sympathies and an extended range of knowledge, he is called upon to be the teacher, consoler, and friend of all his parishioners. "The clergyman is with his parishioners and among them," says Coleridge;* "he is neither in the cloistered cell nor in the wilderness, but a neighbour and a family man, whose education and rank admit him to the mansion of the rich landholder, while his duties make him the frequent visitor of the farmhouse and the cottage." And he describes what may be termed the secular duties of the country parson in apt words: "That to every parish throughout the kingdom there is transplanted a germ of civilisation; that in the remotest villages there is a nucleus round which the capabilities of the place may crystallise and brighten; a model sufficiently superior to excite, yet sufficiently near to encourage and facilitate imitation; this unobtrusive, continuous agency of a Protestant Church Estab-

* See Coleridge's *Table Talk*, page 216 (quoted from *Church and State*).

lishment—*this* it is which the patriot and the philanthropist, who would again unite the love of peace with the faith in the progressive amelioration of mankind, cannot value at too high a price.”* It is, we are glad to believe, the glory of the Church of England that she possesses many such sons, nurtured it may be in the great schools of the country—at all events equipped for their practical work in life at the universities; mingling freely both at school and college with those who are hereafter to hold high rank at the bar, in the senate, in civil and military service abroad; able to touch the intellects of such educated men, as well as to evoke the softer emotions from the hearts of ignorance and indifference. In this knowledge of men and manners alone the English clergy, from its antecedents, is superior to the Scotch ministers on the one hand, and the seminary-nurtured parish priests of Italy and France on the other. Indeed the distinction between the regulars and the seculars in the Middle Ages is not dissimilar to the differences now apparent between the parish priests of Rome and of England. Without wishing to cast the slightest slur on the learning and devotion of the great body of Romish clergy, we should imagine that they must frequently themselves deplore that dwarfing of the sympathetic and affectionate side of life in their own case which belongs so fully to their English brother.

Those great differences in learning and political wisdom which, as Macaulay has eloquently pointed out, marked the town and country clergy in the seventeenth century, have long disappeared. Thanks to railroads, telegraphs, and postal facilities, the most retired dweller in the country can now keep himself better informed in general knowledge and the changeful history of the nation than could a peer who lived far from the capital in Charles the Second's reign. These and the like conveniences of civilisation counterbalance the preponderance of learning amongst city clergy. Many a man will now be found occupied in the care of a rural parish deeply versed, it may be, in Church history, in sacred hermeneutics, in liturgies, in Councils, in doctrines; and his knowledge is rendered useful to others by the promptitude with which he can entrust his thoughts to the printing press. Greater leisure compensates with such scholars for more ready access to books. It is doubtless true that the more brilliant and practical intellects among the clergy are now, as at the Revolution, being absorbed in the great town populations; but the works of laborious culture, the histories and graver treatises which owe their being to clerical industry, are for the most part produced in rural retirement, if investigated in London. It is the fashion to look upon the country parson's as an indolent life; and so it doubtless is in many cases where a weak character cannot or does not make head against the somnolent influences of the country. But busy town-workers, who look down upon the country parson from the feverish

* See, too, some eloquent pages in Wordsworth's Poems, “Appendix, Prefaces, &c.” (Ed. 1857, vol. vi. p. 415, seq.)

and engrossing nature of their daily work, would be surprised at the multifariousness of the duties daily discharged by a conscientious clergyman in the country. Private study, public ministrations, it may be daily public prayers; teaching his own children and those at the parish school; parish accounts; lectures on scientific and useful subjects during the winter, and perhaps a night school as well; the functions, it may be, of diocesan inspector, magistrate, or guardian—these are what ordinarily make great inroads upon his time. Add to these avocations that he may be fond of his garden, or of some scientific pursuit; that he becomes, as his character is better known, the trusted friend and adviser on a multitude of different subjects for his parishioners; that he writes their business letters for the more illiterate, and makes wills for the moribund; that he is ever at the beck and call of want and ignorance; that he either engages in tuition in many cases to eke out a slender income, or occupies himself in writing articles, reviews, &c., for the London press; and when at length he goes to bed tired out with walking, talking, writing, and thinking (for we have said nothing of the weekly discharge of his sacred duties in church, which, of course, require much preparation), his careless critics would not altogether like to change work with him. Certain it is that no public man is in most cases so inadequately paid as is the country parson. Fortunately money is not the motive which he sets before himself; therefore little is heard in the way of complaint from a body of men simply indispensable to the happiness and welfare of the rural districts.

Owing to the isolation of the country clergy, their education and habits of thought, the few instances of eccentricity which the levelling tendencies of modern society yet tolerate, are mainly to be found in their numbers. Gilbert White was doubtless regarded as a harmless oddity by his contemporaries, but he only carried out resolutely that love of natural history which is so common among the clergy. Of the ten or twelve thousand country parsons of the present day, we venture to assert that a large number informally jot down in diary or note-book the date of the coming of the cuckoo, or the departure of the swallow. Even the late Bishop of Oxford found time to make these notes in his diary. To take another side of mental activity, all sense of natural beauty or the sacredness of antiquity will frequently desert a mathematical parson who carries his own studies with him when he quits Cambridge common rooms for rural shades. We remember asking such a one in the North of England, in whose parish was a venerable relic of the past known as King Arthur's Round Table, for some particulars of it. He had never been near it, he confessed; but promptly asserted that with twenty men for three days, and a couple of hundred loads of limestone, he could make a much more surprising table, much as Mr. Fergusson would construct Stonehenge with a hundred Chinese coolies. The late Prebendary Hawker, of Morwenstowe, may perhaps without offence be cited as another instance of eccentricity engendered by solitary habits and much

pondering on one branch of study, until the mental perversion almost passed into lunacy. Most sojourners in the West have heard of his cats and staves, and his wilful closing of the eyes to the facts of modern life. All country lovers, however, will recall instances of parsons who never wear hats, or who breed white mice and canaries in every room of their rectories, or only walk abroad after dark, and the like. Yet these men are generally exemplary parish priests. Want of contact with the outer world has unduly warped some trait of their nature, or led to a harmless custom or taste being carried to an excess. Their parishioners respect them, their liking being blended perhaps with a slight touch of awe. Such men would be missed as integral portions of country life, were it not that, as often as death claims them, a fresh generation of parsons is developing kindred if newer fashioned eccentricities. They are like a patch of colour gratefully hailed in the general uniformity of rustic life.

But it is to other and more useful characteristics that parsons mainly owe their prominence in the country side. This one, it may be, is a great archaeologist, and even dares to contradict the most captious of architectural critics when the latter ventures into his district for one of the autumnal archaeological excursions. Another knows more about mosses and fungi than any other man in England. All the mysteries of ecclesiastical vestments are at a third's fingers' ends ; he will discuss with abundant learning chimeres and morses, chasubles and amices ; and as *ceremoniarius* is in great request when the bishop attempts some novel function. This clergyman is celebrated for his roses which have filled his plate-chest with cups ; that one is an acknowledged authority upon salmon fishing, to whom even the *Field* would defer. Provoke not a discussion on ancient armour with him, or you will be overwhelmed with jambes and sollerets, gussets and lamboys. As amateur ecclesiastical lawyer, that one is unrivalled. He will browbeat the archdeacon, intimidate the rural dean, and knows his way through all the ecclesiastical courts. Those who are not in the secret think that he has mistaken his vocation, and had he chosen the law might ere now have been Lord Chancellor. Those who are behind the scenes, being aware that his father is a legal light, assert that the parson is only a good lawyer if he has time to consult paternal authority by the penny post. Detraction, however, always accompanies distinction. In some remote parts of the country, where squires and squireens have not moved with the times, and are still of opinion that the best way to hold their own in a village is to quarrel with the parson, a series of interminable feuds is the sad spectacle that meets the inquirer in parish after parish. If a squire only reflected a moment in these dark districts, when he lets loose his temper, and then, to punish his opponent, never again goes to church, he might remember his long laid by Latin grammar, and bethink himself that such a contest is one *ubi tu pulsas, ego vapulo tantum* ; that is to say, the honour and satisfaction of the struggle, such as there is, must needs rest with the parson. He is generally the younger man, and will

probably outlive his antagonist, however stoutly that one may brandish his arms, and even if he be the best of haters ; then how unsatisfactory it must be to leave the Church master of the situation, when in the order of nature death overtakes the squire ! No one is so vexatious a foe, too, as a parson. In a little parish he must meet the angry squire almost daily ; he may covertly preach against him in a thousand delicate innuendoes and sly implications. The squire's personality may be embodied in a hundred of the worst characters found in Scripture, and moral reflections drawn from them all in terms the reverse of complimentary, and all intelligible even to Hodge's mind. The squire's wife, too, will frequently prove a traitor in the camp ; she has liked the rector's wife before their lords quarrelled, and now the women hang together, and the squire must nourish a serpent in his bosom. We were once staying in Wales with a squire who straitly refused to go to church on Sunday ; " he had not been near the parson for twenty years." We went and heard a Welsh sermon on Goliath, full of sound and fury, but signifying nothing to us, as we knew nothing of the language. Still the clergyman looked innocent and pacific ; and a very little thing, say a Christmas dinner (a capital mode of peacemaking), would probably have set the foes at one again. Another case comes into the mind where an enraged squire cut his parson for more years than either the one or the other could remember, because palisades were not allowed round a grave. The parson vanquished his foe in an epigram—

You railed at me in life, such was your failing ;
In death be easy, you will have no railing.

More commonly the country parson tries every mode of reconciliation, and then, if his antagonist be still obdurate, falls back upon " the more excellent way " and—forgives him. With an ordinary parishioner who quarrels with him, the parson uses kind words and bides his time for doing him a favour. The most infuriated parishioner speedily perceives that there is no credit to be gained by maintaining animosity against a man who does not even bear a grudge in return ; nay, who is so poor-spirited that he cannot remember there exists such a thing as a quarrel after three months have elapsed. Such an one is not worthy, he thinks, of his steel ; and soon he, too, collapses, and there is an end of it. The old amusement of baiting the parson at the annual vestry meeting has well nigh lost its zest. Since the abolition of church-rates the good man can very well disappoint his foes and remain at home.

As the country clergy are so scattered, a layman tolerably familiar with a large district will frequently neither know nor see many of them unless he attends visitations. This he can well do in the capacity of churchwarden. As Dickens used to talk of every variety of whisker distinguishing the Bar of England, so the rural clergy are noticeable at such gatherings for the marvellous collars and ties which they wear. A tailor curious in such articles could unhesitatingly point out their exact chrono-

logical sequence from a casual inspection of the throng which crowds the narrow streets of the little county town on its way to the church. One very old man appears in a huge starched choker which elongates his neck and keeps up his head, recalling the days of Beau Brummel and the greatest gentleman in Europe. Another has apparently wound a long-used tablecloth round his neck. Then comes one who on the top of such an erection has superadded a monstrous pair of collars, of the kind once irreverently known as "sideboards." His neighbour wears stiff stand-up collars, fashionable at Oxford before the turn-down Byronic collars came into vogue. Curiously enough, the freaks of fashion are again bringing him into the front rank as wearing the "correct thing." The younger men indulge in the comfortable loose-fitting turn-down collar, which always carries a suspicion of broad church with it. It is easy to tell students from the various theological colleges. The blameless stock, innocent of any collar, at once proclaims them. They would as soon wear bands (which this old gentleman still does) as a collar; for it might identify them with Exeter Hall; just as the exploded preaching gown not so long ago was redolent of Geneva. This exhibition of ecclesiastical stocks and collars at a visitation is most amusing to one who possesses any sense of the ludicrous. The flamens' vestry and Aaron's wardrobe have indeed been ransacked. But what shall be said of the gowns which are *de rigueur* on such an occasion? It is not without regret that we notice instances of young men appearing without them, and justifying it by saying, as they were at such and such a private hall or theological college, they never possessed gowns. But taking a cursory view of the elder men's gowns again, enables the age of the wearer as well as that of his gown to be correctly assessed. This is evidently the oldest incumbent, and his gown is positively green with the suns of many a visitation day. Next him we should be disposed to place this happy rubicund man whose gown is appropriately puffed at the sleeves and covered with tags. No degree at any university of which we have cognisance ever prescribed such a vestment. It probably comes from the sister isle, or may be an LL.D. gown. A malicious young fellow whispers that it belongs to a professor at Girton, and is correctly described as *bouillonnée*. Disused preaching gowns of silk in eccentric shapes are common among the older clergy. Most of them were presentation gowns forty years ago. The plain M.A. gowns of Oxford and Cambridge preponderate, however, in various stages of blackness. It is noticeable that, true to old university etiquette, no wearer of an Oxford M.A. gown will put on gloves to this day; though oblivious that a hat or wide-awake has replaced the correct square cap. To a country parson himself a visitation must always be a sad function. Year by year well-known faces are missed. His own becomes yearly more furrowed with care; and the contrast of early hopes, lofty aims, and burning purposes which have long lost their force in his heart must be great as he sees an ever-fresh throng of young clergy occupied in their turn with the highest aims which can animate youthful hopes. But his sympa-

thies are strongly aroused for them, and he can at least murmur a prayer that their experience may be brighter than his own.

If one who has been behind the scenes may divulge secrets, the great weakness of country parsons in consultation is their boundless flow of talk. Bishop Wilberforce might have been able to enforce the rules of debate on his clergy, but any ruridecanal or Greek Testament meeting throughout the country shows how few can vie with him in holding the reins. Such subjects as vestments, ecclesiastical dilapidations, the Burials Bill, and the like, are perennially discussed at these meetings. The same arguments and the same witticisms are reproduced year by year. Gravely a vote is taken on the approach of luncheon or dinner; and then the subject is shelved for another year, when precisely the same procedure ensues. Such topics resemble the fabled wild boar of the ancient Scandinavian Valhalla, which was killed and eaten every day, and came to life again next morning to amuse the heroes by hunting and eating it as before. At all these discussions the authority of the chairman is practically set at nought. Conversation is general, and one side answers the arguments of the other without addressing remarks to the chairman. It is well for the reputation of the clergy that many laymen do not trouble themselves to enter these charmed circles. The old reproach of the unbusinesslike character of the clergy might otherwise be confirmed. A joke is irresistible in these conclaves; and it is to be feared that the parson who sympathised with his clerical neighbour on being informed that the latter was suffering from his liver, with the remark that he hoped it was the only evil liver in the sufferer's parish, is as ubiquitous among the clerical meetings of to-day as was the great rural character Dr. Drop some fifty years ago, in country clerical society.

Considering the eccentricity of many country parsons and the little oddities of character which distinguish almost all, owing to the secluded lives they lead, it is not wonderful that their belongings—their wives, domestics, and horses—frequently acquire singularities of mind and manner, and quaint, humorous traits of their own. Novelists are greatly indebted to these clerical dependents. Many a Caleb Balderstone and Andrew Fairservice, each in his measure, are to be found among them; nor will the latter, like their prototype, when tired of their master's orthodoxy, be at times above "taking a spell o' worthy Mess John Quackleben's flower of sweet savour sown on the middenstead of this world" in some neighbouring Bethesda. On the very glebes occasionally falls a reflection of their life-owners. Thus a legend attached to one in a somewhat Puritanical parish tells how a particular field in it having once been reaped by a strong-minded rector on a Sunday during a ticklish harvest time, its crop could never again be carried home unspoiled. Rain invariably ruined it. In another parish known to us a camp meeting of Methodists which was every summer held in a meadow adjoining the rectory, and was very distasteful to the parson, was for many successive years attended by a deluge of rain. At length a

belief arose, which was very opportune for him, that the farmers would never about that time have the weather dry enough for turnip sowing, unless some other locality were chosen for the meeting. Much to the rector's relief this was done the following year; and by a coincidence bright sunny weather prevailed, which has indelibly stamped the superstition on the rustic minds of that district. The farmer of the glebe frequently grows old in his tenancy, together with his landlord, and displays also, like him, a marked idiosyncrasy. An old rectory, in which many generations of clergy have married, brought up families, and died, is never a very "canny" place. What legions of ghosts must haunt it! The lay mind would be apprehensive of a skeleton in every one of those dark cupboards, which are so common (and convenient) in the upper rooms. At least one room is haunted in every vicarage of decent age and appearance. The dining-room of one rectory with which we were tolerably familiar was dismantled a short time since for the purpose of enlargement, and a skeleton was found extended a few inches below the surface exactly under the hearth-rug. The masons next attacked the drawing-room floor, and lo! another was brought to light exactly where the sofa had stood for years. Of course the site of the house had originally formed part of the churchyard. As for a country parson's servants, no one sooner catches a master's peculiarities; and the fine old stories of the coachman, who, on being dismissed, replied, "Na, na, I drove ye to your christening, and I'll drive ye yet to your burial;" and the cook who answered in similar circumstances, "It's nae use ava gieing me warning; gif ye dinna ken when ye hae gotten a gude servant, I ken when I hae a gude master," constantly repeat themselves, though perhaps in a less pronounced form, in his household. We know a Devon gardener who gravely told his master a year or two since that his scythe would not cut, and that he fancied Nancy Bastin (meaning a reputed witch of the parish) had "overlooked" it, but he would rub it with a "penny-piece" and thus reverse the charm. That parish clerks are mostly characters and humourists is well known. A clergyman lately assured us that when he first came to his present parish in Lincolnshire, he found there a female clerk. The office gave a "settlement," it seemed, in the parish in old days, and the farmers, mindful of the rates, when a new clerk was wanted, had put their heads together, and decided to appoint the only eligible man in the parish who already possessed the right of settlement. This worthy, who was called Cooling, it appeared, however, after his election, could not read. So a very practical farmer suggested in this dilemma that his wife had better "clerk" for him if she were scholar enough to do so. Accordingly Cooling took his place Sunday by Sunday in the clerk's desk ingloriously silent, but much distinguished by wearing a well-frilled shirt, from which he earned with the village the title of Gentleman Cooling, while his better half did her best to read the Psalms in alternate verses with the minister. Her scholarship, however, was not of a very high order, and the result was

excruciating. Certain verses and words were habitually "miscalled;" thus "mighty in operation" invariably became "mighty in petition." At length the parson called in the aid of the squire, and succeeded in ousting the pair. Parish clerks, even in the most rural parishes, are speedily becoming extinct at present. If the Oxford movement had no further result than teaching the congregation their own part in the church's services, it would have deserved well of the community.

The amusements of the country clergy form another tempting topic on which to dilate. The traveller on Monday morning by any main line running to London must have noticed during the summer how frequently the parson of each parish gets in at his roadside station; and should the observer return at the end of the week he will find that the last down train on Saturday evening puts down one parson at least at every station. Railroads have broken down much of the intellectual isolation in which country parsons were wont to live. Now they can visit the British Museum Library and the Academy as frequently as more favoured mortals. Publicity has also softened their ruder amusements, and refined upon the coarser tastes of the clerical generations which closed the last and began the present century. The rough-riding hunting parson who scoured the country by day and caroused at night is extinct even in the wilds of Cumberland, in Wales, and in North Devon, which has formed such a pleasant clerical Alsatia for more than one novelist. We can remember a well-known hunting parson in East Anglia, the last of his race in those parts, with his legs encased in sombre riding trousers so tight that it was popularly believed he slept in them, while his face was the colour of mahogany. And we have the pleasure of knowing the very last of the west country hunting clergymen, in the best of health we trust at present, whose celebrity is world-wide, as well as his acquaintances, and whose parochial ministrations are as exemplary as his devotion to the chase of the red deer has been lifelong. Shooting is left to the man of country tastes with a small parish and large glebe, or to the "squarson," as Bishop Wilberforce appropriately called him who was at once parson and squire of a parish. A small proportion of clergy here and there join the ladies in shooting with the bow and arrow, and discourse glibly of York ends and target practice. They may be divided into two classes. The one, athletic and devoted from old college tastes to violent outdoor exercise, gives itself heart and soul to archery, rises early, shoots a certain number of arrows daily, and maintains the keenest rivalry between its hits and their value at yesterday's practice and the same to-day. Very few of the second and much more numerous class either could or would join in the pursuits of the former. Archery is for them a pleasant excuse for dangling about with wives and sisters, an agreeable mode of spending a summer afternoon with neighbours out of doors. The younger clergy half a dozen years ago were credited with an extreme fondness for croquet. The game is now extinct, its place being filled by lawn tennis; and it furnishes a curious example of the mode in which a

diversion once pursued with a passionate devotion, and fondly believed to have become a national game in the same sense as cricket, can expire in a couple of seasons, like goodness, of its own too much. Directly it became scientific, croquet fell in favour. Curates may still be found near the tennis net ; but an increased fondness for cricket may be observed among them—a gratifying symptom, to a reflecting mind, of a corresponding improvement in the quality of youthful divinity. But fishing is still, as it has been since the Restoration, the amusement *par excellence* of the country clergy. Multitudes of them thankfully welcome the peace o the brookside, and many a sermon is found by them week after week in its stones. Fishing offends no one ; it affords abundant time for thought, giving just the requisite spice of excitement and rivalry with neighbouring anglers to recommend it as literally a re-creation for one weared with the greatness as well as the littleness of parochial matters. Above all it has its literary side, and is a scholarly pursuit. Often, too, it brings a parson into friendly contact with reserved characters, whom he could not meet elsewhere than at the trout stream. We have even known two rods laid aside there for half an hour, and one soul pour out its deepest trouble to another, bound by its holy profession to be at once sympathetic and helpful. Who shall say, when he is thus spending his leisure, that a parson is out of place by the waterside with a rod in his hand ? As a matter of fact the best angler in most districts is usually a parson. Even in Presbyterian Scotland a “fushing meenister” is not now regarded with the same dislike as he was twenty years ago ; not the only sign, it may be added, of a more liberal tone in that country’s theology.

Any disquisition on country parsons would be incomplete without some reference to their wives, but the subject is at once too extensive and too delicate to be cursorily handled. There may be a Mrs. Proudie here and there among them, who lords it over her husband’s flock, and gives “parish parties” at Christmas. The majority of wives, however, are cultivated and often travelled ladies, who have added to their natural refinement much experience of life and a great sympathy for their sisters amongst the labouring class. Perhaps a husband will find them stern critics of his sermons in private ; but outwardly they second all his good works, and set an example of true wifehood to the rest of the parish. It is true that their children seldom turn out in after life what they themselves would wish, and superficial judges wonder and make severe comments on the fact ; but the slenderness of resources which often compels the parson to educate the boys at home, the isolation of the latter from other boys who might “take the conceit out of them,” as is effectually done at school, and their comparative freedom from temptations till suddenly thrown into the midst of them, are not sufficiently taken into account. On the other hand, the best scholars in the public schools and universities are frequently sons of country parsons. The need for economy in their case is of itself an excellent lesson for success in after life, breeding self-restraint, forethought, and variety of resources ; above all, incul-

cating energy and resolution. It is difficult for a boy possessed of these virtues to fall out of the ranks when engaged in the social march of after life. He who can govern a parish, however, cannot always rule his children, much less his wife.

The temper in which a parish is to be managed varies indefinitely according to its constituents. Town and country cases are generally totally dissimilar. Yet a certain affability and friendliness is called for from the parson by all alike. An utter hatred and repugnance to all evil doing, evil speaking, and evil thinking will go a long way in conciliating men's affections to him; while undeviating rectitude on his part and gentlemanly feeling in its deepest sense are indispensable.

The religious qualifications for the right administration of a parish need not here be touched upon. Their possession is taken for granted by all entrusted with the cure of souls. No one ever succeeds, however, who is not energetic. This was the secret of Bishop Wilberforce's efficiency as a parish priest, and of a score more who might readily be named by any one acquainted with the country clergy. But with the most assiduous care and the most unflagging zeal it is not always given to a parson to see fruit in his lifetime from his spiritual husbandry. Of course the clergy are prepared for this; * but results are proportionately cheering, and a parochial minister is not, in the matter of despondency, superior to other men. We have heard a most successful and self-denying parish priest, whose praise is in all the churches of Yorkshire, assert that no one need expect to see a change in a neglected parish under fourteen years. How many persons would rejoice could they perceive an improvement among their parishioners after double those years of hard work!

The most unpleasant clerical character, not only to wife and household, but also to his parish, is the grumbling, disappointed parson. Such a one has frequently thrown away his own chances of promotion or efficiency soon after taking Orders; and, though it may oppress him but little at first, in an ill-regulated mind the consciousness that his want of success is solely due to his own errors of choice, is sufficiently galling during mature years. His friends are well acquainted with his failings, and soon learn to compassionate him as they listen to his attacks upon the bishop for maladministration of preferment (in forgetting his claims), or his caustic reflections upon presentations in the Church of England, and the weakness of its parochial system, owing to the manner in which deserving clergy are habitually disregarded. There are, however, grievances which press upon all the country clergy, though some discuss them loudly and write energetic letters to the *Guardian*, while others merely shrug their shoulders and submit. Foremost among these comes, in secular matters, the question of dilapidations—a question infinitely complicated and rendered more oppressive by the last Act of 1871. "Synodals and procurations"—an ancient and mystical charge formerly

* St. John iv. 37.

exacted from incumbents at every episcopal and archidiaconal visitation, but now considerably modified—is another annoying subject with most country parsons. Official fees altogether do not commend themselves to the clerical understanding ; and most incumbents have suffered so severely in the matter of leases, licenses, registrations, and the like, that, as the burnt child dreads the fire, they somewhat irrationally, it may be, look upon episcopal solicitors and secretaries with considerable antipathy—a dislike which those most frequently genial and hospitable officials scarcely deserve. The post-office brings more troubles to a country parson. Morning after morning his breakfast table is littered with prospectuses of bubble companies to drain the Sahara or lay down tramways in the Great Atlas, mining ventures, money-lenders' notices, and, worst of all, advertisements of wine-merchants. These annoyances do not speak very highly for a clergyman's intelligence in the estimation of that numerous class which attempts, by a cunning bait, to ensnare the simple ; while the persistence of the latter class of tradesmen, in palming off their wares at the cheapest rates, does speak well for the digestion of country clergy, if any of them drink the marvellous compounds offered so liberally as bargains—port from a late eminent divine's cellar at 18s. per dozen, and the like. Fortunately deep waste-paper baskets form part of the furniture of most clerical studies. As for the kind offers of West End money-lenders to provide money at the most trifling rate of interest on *post obits* and so forth, a friend has greatly reduced the importunateness of these social leeches by the happy device of returning them their own circulars torn in half in an unpaid envelope, marked "immediate." He promises to turn his attention ere long to the wine-merchants, and by some kindred device engages to stop the nuisance which their puffs now are, even to those who are not followers of Sir Wilfrid.

As years pass on, the country parson mellows and waxes ripe in goodness and kindness of heart, like the wine in his cellar, or the pears on the sunny wall of his vicarage in mid October. He has outlived the enthusiasms of his youth, and plucked the sting from its disappointed ambition. To go about in his parish doing good has now become his settled temper ; and we love to recognise in him many traits of the country parson as painted by Herbert, and of the scholar as personified in Andrewes, his favourite divine. He knows familiarly every man, woman, and child in his village, having, like old Will Scarlett, buried all their forbears, and indeed the whole parish twice over. Each roadside tree is, in his mind, connected with some anecdote or aspiration. He knows where to find every wild flower and the exact time of its blooming as well as did Thoreau. Even the dogs of the parish are all of them his friends, and he has a kind word for each as he passes. The full term of human life sees him yet hale, active, and sympathetic ; crowned with earthly happiness, if

The prudent partner of his blood,
Wearing the rose of womanhood,

be yet left him, and able to look on to the Unknown which spreads before his gaze with lively hope and unquailing eye. His parishioners regularly pay his "tithe pigeons,"* and he does not trouble the village doctor much, his ailments being slight, as he has ever been fond of outdoor exercise, and his faith is pinned on some simple remedy, some "special receipt, called a cup of buttered beer,"† or the like, "made by the great skill of a parishioner to cure a grievous disease, called a cold, which sorely troubles the said minister." His church, being proportionately old, harmonises in decay with the old man himself, and occasionally furnishes him with an amusing incident to be told to friends. Thus an old vicar of our acquaintance, with much temerity, on one occasion ascended to the belfry, and, the floor giving way under his weight, he was luckily caught under each arm by a joist, and there hung, his legs dangling downwards through the boards, utterly unable to extricate himself. Fortunately he was a great snuff-taker; and, like Napoleon, carried the fragrant mixture loose in his waistcoat pocket. Thus he was able to solace himself from time to time with a pinch, until the clerk accidentally entered the church, and was astounded, on looking up, to find his master suspended, another Mahomet, between heaven and earth. He speedily released the parson, and, thanks to his *insouciance*, that worthy was none the worse for the incident.

A similar story is told of an old clergyman going to preach at an unrestored church in Lincolnshire, some thirty years ago. He entered the great well-like pulpit, and then disappeared. At length, as anxiety became general, the clerk drew nigh, opened the pulpit door, and, on looking in, found that the floor had given way, doubtless owing to the body of divinity which the clergyman had brought in with him. He, too, had slipped through, but was caught by a beam, and thus upheld, though rendered invisible to the congregation. The clerk helped him off his undignified position, and addressed him, with a smile, in the vernacular—"Be thou hurt? We'll have a new floor put in agin thou comes to preach to us next time!"

It is time, however, to turn from these reminiscences. Even to the incumbent whose tenure of the benefice has exceeded half a century (and there have been many notable examples of clerical longevity during late years), the day of release from his earthly labours comes at last. The passing bell, to which he has so often listened, now tolls for him; but he is beyond its mournful tones, and hears no more. In a few days the long procession of sorrowing children and friends winds up to the little grey church on the hill, and, amid many expressions of kindly love, the old man is laid under the churchyard turf, which is ever (and naturally) greener than any other grass. The pent-up tide of human interests in the village once more flows into its accustomed channels, and all are eager over their teacups to know who the new parson is to be. In due

* See Cardwell's *Documentary Annals*, vol. ii. p. 125.

† *Ibid.* p. 124

time he comes; and soon he, too, brings a bride, and a few more years slip by, and again the cycle of duty and happiness revolves, and the round of clerical life so runs on from age to age, and the old parsonage is peopled with many a ghost of past possessors, while, spring by spring, the oak on the lawn renews its strength and looks down in unchanged vigour on the changeful spectacles of humanity which successively act themselves out by its side. But there is one scene on the death of an incumbent which is more melancholy to a thoughtful observer than even the departure for ever of his widow from the home of her early wedded happiness, and that is the sale of the good man's books. Probably he possessed a useful and well-chosen library, which he valued more than any other of his inanimate chattels. Here stood his college prizes, Plato and Gibbon—there were his favourite commentators; a row of "poetry and other booke, good ones, I warrant ye" jostled the best works on the topography and natural history of the district. Now they are all ignominiously tied up in lots and flung on the floor, fingered by curious labourers and bargain-loving Jews, their titles murdered by the rustic auctioneer as he puts them up, and each lot, amid merriment sufficiently incongruous under the circumstances, knocked down to country bumpkins for a few shillings where the late owner had spent pounds. It is not the loss at which such private libraries are always sold which is so affecting, as the dispersal of treasures which had been carefully amassed and deeply valued by their dead owner. Book-lovers soon learn to look upon their idols as possessing sympathies and feelings like themselves. The pathetic side of a book's character is now prominently brought forward. To think of that *Icon Basilike*, in its tattered leather covering, being carried off by the farrier to wrap his horse-balls in; while a little Elzevir, for which a farmer has, in total ignorance of its estimation, given sixpence, is thrown into his light cart, and becomes his children's plaything on reaching home! What stronger irony has Fate in store for books as well as for their owners? Therefore the sad spectacle of the sale of the parson's books continually repeats itself around us, and is, for the same reason, continually disregarded. To the contemplative spectator, however, no more touching conclusion could be found than this, the last scene in the life of a country parson; "vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Yet these reverent thoughts may well be intensified as he looks on to a day when some other books are to be opened, not only for the poor parson, but also for himself; and then he murmurs the grand old prayer—with which the parson had been so familiar—that, with One Above as "our Ruler and Guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal."

in the moon and a bats glided a spindly cool air through him ; and as if his enemies had joined him ready to slay, with piping him, as the moment his own thoughts of his most noxious act, his hand to bind his hands, and, while he did not know it, his heart to bind his thoughts, all round him.

The Pavilion on the Links.

(IN TWO PARTS.)

PART II.

CHAPTER V.

TELLS OF AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN NORTHMOUR, YOUR MOTHER, AND MYSELF.

WITH the first peep of day, I retired from the open to my old lair among the sand-hills, there to await the coming of your mother. The morning was grey, wild, and melancholy ; the wind moderated before sunrise, and then went about, and blew in puffs from the shore ; the sea began to go down, but the rain still fell without mercy. Over all the wilderness of links there was not a creature to be seen. Yet I felt sure the neighbourhood was alive with skulking foes. The light that had been so suddenly and surprisingly flashed upon my face as I lay sleeping, and the hat that had been blown ashore by the wind from over Graden Floe, were two speaking signals of the peril that environed your mother and the party in the pavilion.

It was, perhaps, half-past seven, or nearer eight, before I saw the door open, and that dear figure come towards me in the rain. I was waiting for her on the beach before she had crossed the sand-hills.

“ I have had such trouble to come ! ” she cried. “ They did not wish me to go walking in the rain. I had to show them my temper,” she added, tossing her head.

“ Clara,” I said, “ you are not frightened ? ”

“ No,” said she, with a simplicity that filled my heart with confidence. For your mother, my dear children, was the bravest as well as the best of women ; in my experience, I have not found the two go always together, but with her they did ; and she combined the extreme of fortitude with the most endearing and beautiful virtues.

I told her what had happened ; and, though her cheek grew visibly paler, she retained perfect control over her senses.

“ You see now that I am safe,” said I, in conclusion. “ They do not mean to harm me ; for, had they chosen, I was a dead man last night.”

She laid her hand upon my arm.

“ And I had no presentiment ! ” she cried.

Her accent thrilled me with delight. I put my arm about her, and strained her to my side ; and, before either of us was aware, her hands

were on my shoulders and my lips upon her mouth. Yet up to that moment no word of love had passed between your mother and myself. To this day I remember the touch of her cheek, which was wet and cold with the rain ; and many a time since, when she has been washing her face, I have kissed it again for the sake of that morning on the beach. Now that she is taken from me, and I finish my pilgrimage alone, I recall our old lovingkindnesses and the deep honesty and affection which united us, and my present loss seems but a trifle in comparison.

We may have thus stood for some seconds—for time passes quickly with lovers—before we were startled by a peal of laughter close at hand. It was not natural mirth, but seemed to be affected in order to conceal an angrier feeling. We both turned, though I still kept my left arm about your mother's waist ; nor did she seek to withdraw herself ; and there, a few paces off upon the beach, stood Northmour, his head lowered, his hands behind his back, his nose white with passion.

“Ah, Cassilis !” he said, as I disclosed my face.

“That same,” said I ; for I was not at all put about.

“And so, Miss Huddlestone,” he continued slowly but savagely, “this is how you keep your faith to your father and to me ? This is the value you set upon your father's life ? And you are so infatuated with this young gentleman that you must brave ruin, and decency, and common human caution——”

“Miss Huddlestone——” I was beginning to interrupt him, when he, in his turn, cut in brutally—

“You hold your tongue,” said he ; “I am speaking to that girl.”

“That girl, as you call her, is my wife,” said I ; and your mother only leaned a little nearer, so that I knew she had affirmed my words.

“Your what ?” he cried. “You lie !”

“Northmour,” I said, “we all know you have a bad temper, and I am the last man to be irritated by words. For all that, I propose that you speak lower, for I am convinced that we are not alone.”

He looked round him, and it was plain my remark had in some degree sobered his passion. “What do you mean ?” he asked.

I only said one word : “Italians.”

He swore a round oath, and looked at us, from one to the other.

“Mr. Cassilis knows all that I know,” said your mother.

“What I want to know,” he broke out, “is where the devil Mr. Cassilis comes from, and what the devil Mr. Cassilis is doing here. You say you are married ; that I do not believe. If you were, Graden Floe would soon divorce you ; four minutes and a half, Cassilis. I keep my private cemetery for my friends.”

“It took somewhat longer,” said I, “for that Italian.”

He looked at me for a moment half daunted, and then, almost civilly, asked me to tell my story. “You have too much the advantage of me, Cassilis,” he added. I complied of course ; and he listened, with several ejaculations, while I told him how I had come to Graden ; that it was I

whom he had tried to murder on the night of landing ; and what I had subsequently seen and heard of the Italians.

" Well," said he, when I had done, " it is here at last ; there is no mistake about that. And what, may I ask, do you propose to do ? "

" I propose to stay with you and lend a hand," said I.

" You are a brave man," he returned, with a peculiar intonation.

" I am not afraid," said I.

" And so," he continued, " I am to understand that you two are married ? And you stand up to it before my face, Miss Huddlestone ? "

" We are not yet married," said your mother ; " but we shall be as soon as we can."

" Bravo !" cried Northmour. " And the bargain ? D—n it, you're not a fool, young woman ; I may call a spade a spade with you. How about the bargain ? You know as well as I do what your father's life depends upon. I have only to put my hands under my coat-tails and walk away, and his throat would be cut before the evening."

" Yes, Mr. Northmour," returned your mother, with great spirits ; " but that is what you will never do. You made a bargain that was unworthy of a gentleman ; but you are a gentleman for all that, and you will never desert a man whom you have begun to help."

" Aha ! " said he. " You think I will give my yacht for nothing ? You think I will risk my life and liberty for love of the old gentleman ; and then, I suppose, be best man at the wedding, to wind up ? Well," he added, with an odd smile, " perhaps you are not altogether wrong. But ask Cassilis here. He knows me. Am I a man to trust ? Am I safe and scrupulous ? Am I kind ? "

" I know you talk a great deal, and sometimes, I think, very foolishly," replied your mother ; " but I know you are a gentleman, and I am not the least afraid."

He looked at her with peculiar approval and admiration ; then, turning to me, " Do you think I would give her up without a struggle, Frank ? " said he. " I tell you plainly, you look out. The next time we come to blows——"

" Will make the third," I interrupted, smiling.

" Aye, true ; so it will," he said. " I had forgotten. Well, the third time's lucky."

" The third time, you mean, you will have the crew of the *Red Earl* to help," I said.

" Do you hear him ? " he asked, turning to your mother.

" I hear two men speaking like cowards," said she. " I should despise myself either to think or speak like that. And neither of you believe one word that you are saying, which makes it the more wicked and silly."

" She's a perfect cock-sparrow, Frank ! " cried Northmour. " But she's not yet Mrs. Cassilis. I say no more. The present is not for me."

Then your mother surprised me.

" I leave you here," she said suddenly. " My father has been too

long alone. But remember this : you are to be friends, for you are both good friends to me."

She has since told me her reason for this step. As long as she remained, she declares that we two would have continued to quarrel ; and I suppose that she was right, for when she was gone we fell at once into a sort of confidentiality.

Northmour stared after her as she went away over the sand-hill.

"She is the only woman in the world!" he exclaimed with an oath. "Look at her action."

I, for my part, leaped at this opportunity for a little further light.

"See here, Northmour," said I ; "we are all in a tight place, are we not?"

"I believe you, my boy," he answered, looking me in the eyes, and with great emphasis. "We have all hell upon us, that's the truth. You may believe me or not, but I'm afraid of my life."

"Tell me one thing," said I. "What are they after, these Italians ? What ails them at Mr. Huddlestone ?"

"Don't you know ?" he cried. "The black old scamp had *carbonaro* funds on a deposit—two hundred and eighty thousand ; and of course he gambled it away on stocks. There was to have been a revolution in the Tridentino, in Parma ; but the revolution is off, and the whole wasps' nest is after Huddlestone. We shall all be lucky if we can save our skins."

"The *carbonari*!" I exclaimed ; "God help him indeed !"

"Amen !" said Northmour. "And now, look here : I have said that we are in a fix ; and, frankly, I shall be glad of your help. If I can't save Huddlestone, I want at least to save the girl. Come and stay in the pavilion ; and, there's my hand on it, I shall act as your friend until the old man is either clear or dead. But," he added, "once that is settled, you become my rival once again, and I warn you—mind yourself."

"Done !" said I ; and we shook hands.

"And now let us go directly to the fort," said Northmour ; and he began to lead the way through the rain.

CHAPTER VI.

TELLS OF MY INTRODUCTION TO THE TALL MAN.

We were admitted to the pavilion by your mother, and I was surprised by the completeness and security of the defences. A barricade of great strength, and yet easy to displace, supported the door against any violence from without ; and the shutters of the dining-room, into which I was led directly, and which was feebly illuminated by a lamp, were even more elaborately fortified. The panels were strengthened by bars and cross-bars ; and these, in their turn, were kept in position by a system of

braces and struts, some abutting on the floor, some on the roof, and others, in fine, against the opposite wall of the apartment. It was at once a solid and a well-designed piece of carpentry; and I did not seek to conceal my admiration.

"I am the engineer," said Northmour. "You remember the planks in the garden? Behold them!"

"I did not know you had so many talents," said I.

"Are you armed?" he continued, pointing to an array of guns and pistols, all in admirable order, which stood in line against the wall or were displayed upon the sideboard.

"Thank you," I returned; "I have gone armed since our last encounter. But, to tell you the truth, I have had nothing to eat since early yesterday evening."

Northmour produced some cold meat, to which I eagerly set myself, and a bottle of good Burgundy, by which, wet as I was, I did not scruple to profit. I have always been an extreme temperance man on principle; but it is useless to push principle to excess, and on this occasion I believe that I finished three-quarters of the bottle. As I ate, I still continued to admire the preparations for defence.

"We could stand a siege," I said at length.

"Ye—es," drawled Northmour; "a very little one, per—haps. It is not so much the strength of the pavilion I misdoubt; it is the double danger that kills me. If we get to shooting, wild as the country is some one is sure to hear it, and then—why then it's the same thing, only different, as they say: caged by law, or killed by *carbonari*. There's the choice. It is a devilish bad thing to have the law against you in this world, and so I tell the old gentleman upstairs. He is quite of my way of thinking."

"Speaking of that," said I, "what kind of person is he?"

"Oh, he!" cried the other; "he's a rancid fellow, as far as he goes. I should like to have his neck wrung to-morrow by all the devils in Italy. I am not in this affair for him. You take me? I made a bargain for Missy's hand, and I mean to have it too."

"That, by the way," said I, "I understand. But how will Mr. Huddlestane take my intrusion?"

"Leave that to Clara," returned Northmour.

I could have broken his back, my dear children, for this coarse familiarity; but I respected the truce, as, I am bound to say, did Northmour, and so long as the danger continued not a cloud arose in our relation. I bear him this testimony with the most unfeigned satisfaction; nor am I without pride when I look back upon my own behaviour. For surely no two men were ever left in a position so invidious and irritating.

As soon as I had done eating, we proceeded to inspect the lower floor. Window by window we tried the different supports, now and then making an inconsiderable change; and the strokes of the hammer sounded with surprising loudness through the house. I proposed, I re-

member, to make loopholes ; but he told me they were already made in the windows of the upper story. It was an anxious business this inspection, and left me down-hearted. There were two doors and five windows to protect, and, counting your mother, only four of us to defend them against an unknown number of foes. I communicated my doubts to Northmour, who assured me, with unmoved composure, that he entirely shared them.

"Before morning," said he, "we shall all be butchered and buried in Graden Floe. For me, that is written."

I could not help shuddering at the mention of the quicksand, but reminded Northmour that our enemies had spared me in the wood.

"Do not flatter yourself," said he. "Then you were not in the same boat with the old gentleman ; now you are. It's the floe for all of us, mark my words."

I trembled for your mother ; and just then her dear voice was heard calling us to come upstairs. Northmour showed me the way, and, when he had reached the landing, knocked at the door of what used to be called *My Uncle's Bedroom*, as the founder of the pavilion had designed it especially for himself.

"Come in, Northmour ; come in, dear Mr. Cassilis," said a voice from within.

Pushing open the door, Northmour admitted me before him into the apartment. As I came in I could see your mother slipping out by the side door into the study, which had been prepared as her bedroom. In the bed, which was drawn back against the wall, instead of standing, as I had last seen it, boldly across the window, sat, my dear children, your grandfather, Bernard Huddlestane, the defaulting banker. Little as I had seen of him by the shifting light of the lantern on the links, I had no difficulty in recognising him for the same. He had a long—long and sallow—countenance, surrounded by a long red beard and side-whiskers. His broken nose and high cheekbones gave him somewhat the air of a Kalmuck, and his light eyes shone with the excitement of a high fever. He wore a skull-cap of black silk ; a huge Bible lay open before him on the bed, with a pair of gold spectacles in the place, and a pile of other books lay on the stand by his side. The green curtains lent a cadaverous shade to his cheek ; and, as he sat propped on pillows, his great stature was painfully hunched, and his head protruded till it overhung his knees. I believe if your grandfather had not died otherwise, he must have fallen a victim to consumption in the course of but a very few weeks.

He held out to me a hand, long, thin, and disagreeably hairy.

"Come in, come in, Mr. Cassilis," said he. "Another protector—ahem!—another protector. Always welcome as a friend of my daughter's, Mr. Cassilis. How they have rallied about me, my daughter's friends ! May God in heaven bless and reward them for it !"

I gave him my hand, of course, because I could not help it ; but the

sympathy I had been prepared to feel for your mother's father was immediately soured by his appearance, and the wheedling, unreal tones in which he spoke.

"Cassilis is a good man," said Northmour; "worth ten."

"So I hear," cried Mr. Huddlestone eagerly; "so my girl tells me. Ah, Mr. Cassilis, my sin has found me out, you see! I am very low, very low; but I hope equally penitent. These are all devotional works," he added, indicating the books by which he was surrounded. "We must all come to the throne of grace at last, Mr. Cassilis. For my part, I come late indeed; but with unfeigned humility, I trust."

"Fiddle-de-dee!" said Northmour roughly.

"No, no, dear Northmour!" cried the banker. "You must not say that; you must not try to shake me. You forget, my dear, good boy, you forget I may be called this very night before my Maker."

His excitement was pitiful to behold; and I felt myself grow indignant with Northmour, whose infidel opinions I well knew, and heartily dreaded, as he continued to taunt the poor sinner out of his humour of repentance.

"Pooh, my dear Huddlestone!" said he. "You do yourself injustice. You are a man of the world inside and out, and were up to all kinds of mischief before I was born. Your conscience is tanned like South American leather—only you forgot to tan your liver, and that, if you will believe me, is the seat of the annoyance."

"Rogue, rogue! bad boy!" said Mr. Huddlestone, shaking his finger. "I am no precisian, if you come to that; I always hated a precisian; but I never lost hold of something better through it all. I have been a bad boy, Mr. Cassilis; I do not seek to deny that; but it was after my wife's death, and you know, with a widower, it's a different thing: sinful—I won't say no; but there is a gradation, we shall hope. And talking of that— Hark!" he broke out suddenly, his hand raised, his fingers spread, his face racked with interest and terror. "Only the rain, bless God!" he added, after a pause, and with indescribable relief. "Well—as I was saying—ah, yes! Northmour, is that girl away?"—looking round the curtain for your mother—"yes; I just remembered a capital one."

And, leaning forward in bed, he told a story of a description with which, I am happy to say, I have never sullied my lips, and which, in his present danger and surrounded as he was with religious reading, filled me with indignation and disgust. Perhaps, my dear children, you have sometimes, when your mother was not by to mitigate my severity, found me narrow and hard in discipline; I must own I have always been a martinet in matters of decorum, and I have sometimes repented the harshness with which I reproved your unhappy grandfather upon this occasion. I will not repeat even the drift of what I said; but I reminded him, perhaps cruelly, of the horrors of his situation. Northmour burst out laughing, and cut a joke at the expense, as I considered, of polite-

ness, decency, and reverence alike. We might readily have quarrelled then and there; but Mr. Huddlestone interposed with a severe reproof to Northmour for his levity.

"The boy is right," he said. "I am an unhappy sinner, and you but a half friend to encourage me in evil."

And with great fluency and unction he put up a short extempore prayer, at which, coming so suddenly after his anecdote, I confess I knew not where to look. Then said he: "Let us sing a hymn together, Mr. Cassilis. I have one here which my mother taught me a great, great many years ago, as you may imagine. You will find it very touching, and quite spiritual."

"Look here," broke in Northmour; "if this is going to become a prayer-meeting, I am off. Sing a hymn, indeed! What next? Go out and take a little airing on the beach, I suppose? or in the wood, where it's thick, and a man can get near enough for the stiletto? I wonder at you, Huddlestone! and I wonder at you too, Cassilis! Ass as you are, you might have better sense than that."

Roughly as he expressed himself, I could not but admit that Northmour's protest was grounded upon common sense; and I have myself, all my life long, had little taste for singing hymns except in church. I was, therefore, the more willing to turn the talk upon the business of the hour.

"One question, sir," said I to Mr. Huddlestone. "Is it true that you have money with you?"

He seemed annoyed by the question, but admitted with reluctance that he had a little.

"Well," I continued, "it is their money they are after, is it not? Why not give it up to them?"

"Ah!" replied he, shaking his head, "I have tried that already, Mr. Cassilis; and alas! that it should be so, but it is blood they want."

"Huddlestone, that's a little less than fair," said Northmour. "You should mention that what you offered them was upwards of two hundred thousand short. The deficit is worth a reference; it is for what they call a cool sum, Frank. Then, you see, the fellows reason in their clear Italian way; and it seems to them, as indeed it seems to me, that they may just as well have both while they're about it—money and blood together, by George, and no more trouble for the extra pleasure."

"Is it in the pavilion?" I asked.

"It is; and I wish it were in the bottom of the sea instead," said Northmour; and then suddenly—"What are you making faces at me for?" he cried to Mr. Huddlestone, on whom I had unconsciously turned my back. "Do you think Cassilis would sell you?"

Mr. Huddlestone protested that nothing had been further from his mind.

"It is a good thing," retorted Northmour in his ugliest manner.

" You might end by wearying us. What were you going to say ? " he added, turning to me.

" I was going to propose an occupation for the afternoon," said I. " Let us carry that money out, piece by piece, and lay it down before the pavilion door. If the *carbonari* come, why, it's theirs at any rate."

" No, no," cried Mr. Huddlestome; " it does not, it cannot belong to them ! It should be distributed *pro rata* among all my creditors."

" Come now, Huddlestome," said Northmour, " none of that."

" Well, but my daughter," moaned the wretched man.

" Your daughter will do well enough. Here are two suitors, Cassilis and I, neither of us beggars, between whom she has to choose. And as for myself, to make an end of arguments, you have no right to a farthing, and, unless I'm much mistaken, you are going to die."

It was certainly very cruelly said ; but Mr. Huddlestome was a man who attracted little sympathy ; and, although I saw him wince and shudder, I mentally endorsed the rebuke ; nay, I added a contribution of my own.

" Northmour and I," I said, " are willing enough to help you to save your life, but not to escape with stolen property."

He struggled for a while with himself, as though he were on the point of giving way to anger, but prudence had the best of the controversy.

" My dear boys," he said, " do with me or my money what you will. I leave all in your hands. Let me compose myself."

And so we left him, gladly enough I am sure. The last that I saw, he had once more taken up his great Bible, and was adjusting his spectacles to read. Of all the men it was ever my fortune to know, your grandfather has left the most bewildering impression on my mind ; but I have no fancy to judge where I am conscious that I do not understand.

CHAPTER VII.

TELLS HOW A WORD WAS CRIED THROUGH THE PAVILION WINDOW.

THE recollection of that afternoon will always be graven on my mind. Northmour and I were persuaded that an attack was imminent ; and if it had been in our power to alter in any way the order of events, that power would have been used to precipitate rather than delay the critical moment. The worst was to be anticipated ; yet we could conceive no extremity so miserable as the suspense we were now suffering. I have never been an eager, though always a great, reader ; but I never knew books so insipid as those which I took up and cast aside that afternoon in the pavilion. Even talk became impossible, as the hours went on. One or other was always listening for some sound, or peering from an

upstairs window over the links. And yet not a sign indicated the presence of our foes.

We debated over and over again my proposal with regard to the money; and had we been in complete possession of our faculties, I think we should have condemned it as unwise; but we were flustered with alarm, grasped at a straw, and determined, although it was as much as advertising Mr. Huddlestane's presence in the pavilion, to carry my proposal into effect.

The sum was part in specie, part in bank paper, and part in circular notes payable to the name of James Gregory. We took it out, counted it, enclosed it once more in a despatch-box belonging to Northmour, and prepared a letter in Italian which we tied to the handle. It was signed by both of us under oath, and declared that this was all the money which had escaped the failure of the house of Huddlestane. This was, perhaps, the maddest action ever perpetrated by two persons professing to be sane. Had the despatch-box fallen into other hands than those for which it was intended, we stood criminally convicted on our own written testimony; but, as I have said, we were neither of us in a condition to judge soberly, and had a thirst for action that drove us to do something, right or wrong, rather than endure the agony of waiting. Moreover, as we were both convinced that the hollows of the links were alive with hidden spies upon our movements, we hoped that our appearance with the box might lead to a parley, and, perhaps, a compromise.

It was nearly three when we issued from the pavilion. The rain had taken off; the sun shone quite cheerfully. I have never seen the gulls fly so close about the house or approach so fearlessly to human beings. On the very doorstep one flapped heavily past our heads, and uttered its wild cry in my very ear.

"There is an omen for you," said Northmour, who, like all free-thinkers, was much under the influence of superstition. "They think we are already dead."

I made some light rejoinder, but it was with half my heart; for the circumstance had impressed me.

A yard or two before the gate, on a path of smooth turf, we set down the despatch-box; and Northmour waved a white handkerchief over his head. Nothing replied. We raised our voices, and cried aloud in Italian that we were there as ambassadors to arrange the quarrel; but the stillness remained unbroken save by the sea-gulls and the surf. I had a weight at my heart when we desisted; and I saw that even Northmour was unusually pale. He looked over his shoulder nervously, as though he feared that some one had crept between him and the pavilion door.

"By God," he said in a whisper, "this is too much for me!"

I replied in the same key: "Suppose there should be none, after all?"

"Look there," he returned, nodding with his head, as though he had been afraid to point.

I glanced in the direction indicated ; and there, from the northern quarter of the Sea-Wood, beheld a thin column of smoke rising steadily against the now cloudless sky.

"Northmour," I said (we still continued to talk in whispers), "it is not possible to endure this suspense. I prefer death fifty times over. Stay you here to watch the pavilion ; I will go forward and make sure, if I have to walk right into their camp."

He looked once again all round him with puckered eyes, and then nodded assentingly to my proposal.

My heart beat like a sledge-hammer as I set out walking rapidly in the direction of the smoke ; and, though up to that moment I had felt chill and shivering, I was suddenly conscious of a glow of heat over all my body. The ground in this direction was very uneven ; a hundred men might have lain hidden in as many square yards about my path. But I had not practised the business in vain, chose such routes as cut at the very root of concealment, and, by keeping along the most convenient ridges, commanded several hollows at a time. It was not long before I was rewarded for my caution. Coming suddenly on to a mound somewhat more elevated than the surrounding hummocks, I saw, not thirty yards away, a man bent almost double, and running as fast as his attitude permitted, along the bottom of a gully. I had dislodged one of the spies from his ambush. As soon as I sighted him, I called loudly both in English and Italian ; and he, seeing concealment was no longer possible, straightened himself out, leaped from the gully, and made off as straight as an arrow for the borders of the wood.

It was none of my business to pursue ; I had learned what I wanted—that we were beleaguered and watched in the pavilion ; and I returned at once, and walking as nearly as possible in my old footsteps, to where Northmour awaited me beside the despatch-box. He was even paler than when I had left him, and his voice shook a little.

"Could you see what he was like ?" he asked.

"He kept his back turned," I replied.

"Let us get into the house, Frank. I don't think I'm a coward, but I can stand no more of this," he whispered.

All was still and sunshiny about the pavilion, as we turned to re-enter it ; even the gulls had flown in a wider circuit, and were seen flickering along the beach and sand-hills ; and I can assure you, my dear children, that this loneliness terrified me more than a regiment under arms. It was not until the door was barricaded that I could draw a full inspiration and relieve the weight that lay upon my bosom. Northmour and I exchanged a steady glance ; and I suppose each made his own reflections on the white and startled aspect of the other.

"You were right," I said. "All is over. Shake hands, old man, for the last time."

"Yes," replied he, "I will shake hands ; for, as sure as I am here, I bear no malice. But, remember, if, by some impossible accident, we should

give the slip to these blackguards, I'll take the upper hand of you by fair or foul."

"Oh," said I, "you weary me!"

He seemed hurt, and walked away in silence to the foot of the stairs, where he paused.

"You do not understand," said he. "I am not a swindler, and I guard myself; that is all. It may weary you or not, Mr. Cassilis, I do not care a rush; I speak for my own satisfaction, and not for your amusement. You had better go upstairs and court the girl; for my part, I stay here."

"And I stay with you," I returned. "Do you think I would steal a march, even with your permission?"

"Frank," he said, smiling, "it's a pity you are an ass, for you have the makings of a man. I think I must be *fey* to-day; you cannot irritate me even when you try. Do you know," he continued softly, "I think we are the two most miserable men in England, you and I? we have got on to thirty without wife or child, or so much as shop to look after—poor, pitiful, lost devils, both! And now we clash about a girl! As if there were not several millions in the United Kingdom! Ah, Frank, Frank, the one who loses this throw, be it you or me, he has my pity! It were better for him—how does the Bible say?—that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the depth of the sea. Let us take a drink," he concluded suddenly, but without any levity of tone.

I was touched by his words, and consented. He sat down on the table in the dining-room, and held up the glass of sherry to his eye.

"If you beat me, Frank," he said, "I shall take to drink. What will you do, if it goes the other way?"

"God knows," I returned.

"Well," said he, "here is a toast in the meantime: '*Italia irredenta!*'"

The remainder of the day was passed in the same dreadful tedium and suspense. I laid the table for dinner, while Northmour and your mother prepared the meal together in the kitchen. I could hear their talk as I went to and fro, and was surprised to find it ran all the time upon myself. Northmour again bracketed us together, and rallied your mother on a choice of husbands; but he continued to speak of me with some feeling, and uttered nothing to my prejudice unless he included himself in the condemnation. This awakened a sense of gratitude in my heart, which combined with the immediateness of our peril to fill my eyes with tears. After all, I thought—and perhaps the thought was laughably vain—we were here three very noble human beings to perish in defence of a thieving banker.

Before we sat down to table, I looked forth from an upstairs window. The day was beginning to decline; the links were utterly deserted; the despatch-box still lay untouched where we had left it hours before.

Mr. Huddlestone, in a long yellow dressing-gown, took one end of the table, Clara the other ; while Northmour and I faced each other from the sides. The lamp was brightly trimmed ; the wine was good ; the viands, although mostly cold, excellent of their sort. We seemed to have agreed tacitly ; all thought of the impending catastrophe was banished ; and we made as merry a party of four as you would wish to see. From time to time, it is true, Northmour or I would rise from table and make a round of the defences ; and, on each of these occasions, Mr. Huddlestone was recalled to a sense of his tragic predicament, glanced up with ghastly eyes, and bore for an instant on his countenance the stamp of terror. But he hastened to empty his glass, wiped his forehead with his hand-kerchief, and joined again in the conversation.

I was astonished at the wit and information he displayed. Your grandfather's, my dear children, was no ordinary character ; he had read and observed for himself ; his gifts were sound ; and, though I could never have learned to love the man, I began to understand his success in business, and the great respect in which he had been held before his failure. He had, above all, the talent of society ; and, though I never heard him speak but on this one and most unfavourable occasion, I set him down among the most brilliant conversationalists I ever met.

He was relating with great gusto, and seemingly no feeling of shame, the manœuvres of a scoundrelly commission merchant whom he had known and studied in his youth, and we were all listening with an odd mixture of mirth and embarrassment, when our little party was brought abruptly to an end in the most startling manner.

A noise like that of a wet finger on the window-pane interrupted your grandfather's tale ; and in an instant we were all four as white as paper, and sat tongue-tied and motionless around the table.

"A snail," I said at last ; for I had heard that these animals make a noise somewhat similar in character.

"Snail be d—d !" said Northmour. "Hush !"

The same sound was repeated twice at regular intervals ; and then a formidable voice shouted through the shutters the Italian word "*Traditore !*"

Mr. Huddlestone threw his head in the air ; his eyelids quivered ; next moment he fell insensible below the table. Northmour and I had each run to the armoury and seized a gun. Your mother was on her feet with her hand at her throat.

So we stood waiting, for we thought the hour of attack was certainly come ; but second passed after second, and all but the surf remained silent in the neighbourhood of the pavilion.

"Quick," said Northmour ; "upstairs with him before they come."

CHAPTER VIII.

TELLS THE LAST OF THE TALL MAN.

SOMEHOW or other, by hook and crook, and between the three of us, we got Bernard Huddlestane bundled upstairs and laid upon the bed in *My Uncle's Room*. During the whole process, which was rough enough, he gave no sign of consciousness, and he remained, as we had thrown him, without changing the position of a finger. Your mother opened his shirt and began to wet his head and bosom ; while Northmour and I ran to the window. The weather continued clear ; the moon, which was now about full, had risen and shed a very clear light upon the links ; yet, strain our eyes as we might, we could distinguish nothing moving. A few dark spots, more or less, on the uneven expanse were not to be identified ; they might be crouching men, they might be shadows ; it was impossible to be sure.

"Thank God," said Northmour, "Aggie is not coming to-night."

Aggie was the name of the old nurse ; he had not thought of her till now ; but that he should think of her at all, was a trait that surprised me in the man.

We were again reduced to waiting. Northmour went to the fireplace and spread his hands before the red embers, as if he were cold. I followed him mechanically with my eyes, and in so doing turned my back upon the window. At that moment, a very faint report was audible from without, and a ball shivered a pane of glass, and buried itself in the shutter two inches from my head. I heard your mother scream ; and though I whipped instantly out of range and into a corner, she was there, so to speak, before me, with her arms about my neck, and beseeching to know if I were hurt. I felt that I could stand to be shot at every day and all day long, with such marks of solicitude for a reward ; and I was still busy returning her caresses, in complete forgetfulness of our situation, when the voice of Northmour recalled me to myself.

"An air-gun," he said. "They wish to make no noise."

I put your mother aside, and looked at him. He was standing with his back to the fire and his hands clasped behind him ; and I knew, by the black look on his face, that passion was boiling within. I had seen just such a look before he attacked me, that March night, in the adjoining chamber ; and, though I could make every allowance for his anger, I confess I trembled for the consequences. I glanced at your mother with warning in my eyes ; but she misinterpreted my glance, and continued to cling to me and make much of me. Northmour gazed straight before him ; but he could see with the tail of his eye what we were doing, and his temper kept rising like a gale of wind. With regular battle awaiting us outside, this prospect of an interneccine strife within the walls began to daunt me.

Suddenly, as I was thus closely watching his expression and prepared

against the worst, I saw a change, a flash, a look of relief, upon his face. He took up the lamp which stood beside him on the table, and turned to us with an air of some excitement.

"There is one point that we must know," said he. "Are they going to butcher the lot of us, or only Huddlestone? Did they take you for him, and fire at you for your own *beaux yeux*?"

"They took me for him, for certain," I replied. "I am near as tall, and my head is fair."

"I am going to make sure," returned Northmour; and he stepped up to the window, holding the lamp above his head, and stood there, quietly affronting death, for half a minute.

Your mother sought to rush forward and pull him from the place of danger; but I had the pardonable selfishness to hold her back by force.

"Yes," said Northmour, turning coolly from the window; "it's only Huddlestone they want."

"Oh, Mr. Northmour!" cried your mother; but found no more to add; the temerity she had just witnessed seeming beyond the reach of words.

He, on his part, looked at me, cocking his head, with the fire of triumph in his eyes; and I understood at once that he had thus hazarded his life, merely to attract your mother's notice, and depose me from my position as the hero of the hour. He snapped his fingers.

"The fire is only beginning," said he. "When they warm up to their work, they won't be so particular."

A voice was now heard hailing us from the entrance. From the window we could see the figure of a man in the moonlight; he stood motionless, his face uplifted to ours, and a rag of something white on his extended arm; and as we looked right down upon him, though he was a good many yards distant on the links, we could see the moonlight glitter on his eyes.

He opened his lips again, and spoke for some minutes on end, in a key so loud that he might have been heard in every corner of the pavilion, and as far away as the borders of the wood. It was the same voice that had already shouted "*Traditore!*" through the shutters of the dining-room; this time it made a complete and clear statement. If the traitor "Oddlestone" were given up, all others should be spared; if not, no one should escape to tell the tale.

"Well, Huddlestone, what do you say to that?" asked Northmour, turning to the bed.

Up to that moment the banker had given no sign of life, and I, at least, had supposed him to be still lying in a faint; but he replied at once, and in such tones as I have never heard elsewhere, save from a delirious patient, adjured and besought us not to desert him. It was the most hideous and abject performance that my imagination can conceive.

"Enough, you dirty hound!" cried Northmour; and then he threw open the window, leaned out into the night, and in a tone of exultation, and with a total forgetfulness of what was done by your mother, poured out upon the ambassador a string of the most abominable raillery both in English and Italian, and bade him be gone where he had come from. I believe that nothing so delighted Northmour at that moment as the thought that we must all infallibly perish before the night was out.

Meantime the Italian put his flag of truce into his pocket, and disappeared, at a leisurely pace, among the sand-hills.

"They make honourable war," said Northmour. "They are all gentlemen and soldiers. For the credit of the thing, I wish we could change sides—you and I, Frank, and you too, Missy my darling—and leave that jackal on the bed to some one else. Tut! Don't look shocked! We are all going post to what they call eternity, and may as well be above-board while there's time. As far as I'm concerned, if I could first strangle Huddlestone and then get Clara in my arms, I could die with some pride and satisfaction. And as it is, by God, I'll have a kiss!"

Before I could do anything to interfere, he had rudely embraced and repeatedly kissed your resisting mother. Next moment I had pulled him away with fury, and flung him heavily against the wall. He laughed loud and long, and I feared his wits had given way under the strain; for even in the best of days he had been a sparing and a quiet laugher.

"Now, Frank," said he, when his mirth was somewhat appeased, "it's your turn. Here's my hand. Good-bye; farewell!" Then, seeing me stand rigid and indignant, and holding your mother to my side—"Man!" he broke out, "are you angry? Did you think we were going to die with all the airs and graces of society? I took a kiss; I'm glad I had it; and now you can take another if you like, and square accounts."

I turned from him with a feeling of contempt which I did not seek to dissemble.

"As you please," said he. "You've been a prig in life; a prig you'll die."

And with that he sat down in a chair, a rifle over his knee, and amused himself with snapping the lock; but I could see that his ebullition of light spirits (the only one I ever knew him to display) had already come to an end, and was succeeded by a sullen, scowling humour.

All this time our assailants might have been entering the house, and we been none the wiser; we had in truth, one and all, forgotten the danger that so imminently overhung our days. But just then Mr. Huddlestone uttered a cry, and leaped from the bed.

I asked him what was wrong.

"Fire!" he cried. "They have set the house on fire."

Northmour was on his feet in an instant, and he and I ran through the doors of communication with the study. The room was illuminated by a red and angry light. Almost at the moment of our entrance, a tower of flame arose in front of the window, and, with a tingling report, a pane fell inwards on the carpet. They had set fire to the lean-to out-house, where Northmour used to nurse his negatives.

"Hot work," said Northmour. "Let us try in your old room."

We ran thither in a breath, threw up the casement, and looked forth. Along the whole back wall of the pavilion piles of fuel had been arranged and kindled; and it is probable they had been drenched with mineral oil, for, in spite of the morning's rain, they all burned bravely. The fire had taken a firm hold already on the outhouse, which blazed higher and higher every moment; the back door was in the centre of a red-hot bonfire; the eaves we could see, as we looked upward, were already smouldering, for the roof overhung, and was supported by considerable beams of wood. At the same time, hot, pungent, and choking volumes of smoke began to fill the house. There was not a human being to be seen to right or left.

"Ah, well!" said Northmour "here's the end, thank God."

And we returned to *My Uncle's Room*. Mr. Huddlestane was putting on his boots with an air of determination such as I had not hitherto observed. Your mother stood close by him, with her cloak in both hands ready to throw about her shoulders, and a strange look in her eyes, as if she were half hopeful, half doubtful of her father.

"Well, boys and girls," said Northmour, "how about a sally? The oven is heating; it is not good to stay here and be baked; and, for my part, I want to come to my hands with them, and be done."

"There is nothing else left," I replied.

And both your mother and Mr. Huddlestane, though with a very different intonation, added, "Nothing."

As we went downstairs the heat was excessive, and the roaring of the fire filled our ears; and we had scarce reached the passage before the stairs window fell in, a branch of flame shot brandishing through the aperture, and the interior of the pavilion became lit up with that dreadful and fluctuating glare. At the same moment we heard the fall of something heavy and inelastic in the upper story. The whole pavilion, it was plain, had gone alight like a box of matches, and now not only flamed sky-high to land and sea, but threatened with every moment to crumble and fall in about our ears.

Northmour and I cocked our revolvers. Mr. Huddlestane, who had already refused a firearm, put us behind him with a manner of command.

"Let Clara open the door," said he. "So, if they fire a volley, she will be protected. And in the meantime stand behind me. I am the scapegoat; my sins have found me out."

I heard him, as I stood breathless by his shoulder, with my pistol ready, pattering off prayers in a tremulous, rapid whisper; and I confess,

horrid as the thought may seem, I despised him for thinking of supplications in a moment so critical and thrilling. In the meantime, your mother, who was dead white but still possessed her faculties, had displaced the barricade from the front door. Another moment, and she had pulled it open. Firelight and moonlight illuminated the links with confused and changeful lustre, and far away against the sky we could see a long trail of glowing smoke.

Mr. Huddlestone struck Northmour and myself a back-hander in the chest; and while we were thus for the moment incapacitated from action, lifting his arms above his head like one about to dive, he ran straight forward out of the pavilion.

"Here am I!" he cried—"Huddlestone! Kill me, and spare the others!"

His sudden appearance daunted, I suppose, our hidden enemies; for Northmour and I had time to recover, to seize Clara between us, one by each arm, and to rush forth to his assistance, ere anything further had taken place. But scarce had we passed the threshold when there came near a dozen reports and flashes from every direction among the hollows of the links. Mr. Huddlestone staggered, uttered a weird and freezing cry, threw up his arms over his head, and fell backward on the turf.

"*Traditore! Traditore!*" cried the invisible avengers.

And just then, a part of the roof of the pavilion fell in, so rapid was the progress of the fire. A loud, vague, and horrible noise accompanied the collapse, and a vast volume of flame went soaring up to heaven. It must have been visible at that moment from twenty miles out at sea, from the shore at Graden Wester, and far inland from the peak of Graystiel, the most eastern summit of the Caulder hills. Your grandfather, although God knows what were his obsequies, had a fine pyre at the moment of his death.

CHAPTER IX.

TELLS HOW NORTHMOUR CARRIED OUT HIS THREAT.

I SHOULD have the greatest difficulty to tell you what followed next after this tragic circumstance. It is all to me, as I look back upon it, mixed, strenuous, and ineffectual, like the struggles of a sleeper in a nightmare. Your mother, I remember, uttered a broken sigh and would have fallen forward to earth, had not Northmour and I supported her insensible body. I do not think we were attacked; I do not remember even to have seen an assailant; and I believe we deserted Mr. Huddlestone without a glance. I only remember running like a man in a panic, now carrying your mother altogether in my own arms, now sharing her weight with Northmour, now scuffling confusedly for the possession of that dear burden. Why we should have made for my camp in the Hemlock Den, or how we reached it, are points lost for ever to my recollection. The

first moment at which I became definitely sure, your mother had been suffered to fall against the outside of my little tent, Northmour and I were tumbling together on the ground, and he, with contained ferocity, was striking for my head with the butt of his revolver. He had already twice wounded me on the scalp ; and it is to the consequent loss of blood that I am tempted to attribute the sudden clearness of my mind.

I caught him by the wrist.

"Northmour," I remember saying, "you can kill me afterwards. Let us first attend to Clara."

He was at that moment uppermost. Scarcely had the words passed my lips, when he had leaped to his feet and ran towards your mother ; and the next moment, he was straining her to his heart and covering her unconscious hands and face with his caresses.

"Shame!" I cried. "Shame to you, Northmour!"

And, giddy though I still was, I struck him repeatedly upon the head and shoulders.

He relinquished his grasp, and faced me in the broken moonlight.

"I had you under, and I let you go," said he ; "and now you strike me! Coward!"

"You are the coward," I retorted. "Did she wish your kisses while she was still sensible of what she wanted? Not she! And now she may be dying ; and you waste this precious time, licking her face like a dog. Stand aside, and let me help her."

He confronted me for a moment, white and menacing ; then suddenly he stepped aside.

"Help her then," said he.

I threw myself on my knees beside your mother, and loosened, as well as I was able, her dress and corset ; but while I was thus engaged, a grasp descended on my shoulder.

"Keep your hands off her," said Northmour fiercely. "Do you think I have no blood in my veins?"

"Northmour," I cried, "if you will neither help her yourself, nor let me do so, do you know that I shall have to kill you?"

"That is better!" he cried. "Let her die also, where's the harm? Step aside from that girl! and stand up to fight."

"You will observe," said I, half rising, "that I have not kissed her yet."

"I dare you to," he cried.

I do not know what possessed me, my dear children ; it was one of the things I am most ashamed of in my life, though, as your mother used to say, I knew that my kisses would be always welcome, were she dead or living ; down I fell again upon my knees, parted the hair from her forehead, and, with the dearest respect, laid my lips for a moment on that cold brow. It was such a caress as a father might have given ; it was such a one as was not unbecoming from a man soon to die to a woman already dead.

"And now," said I, "I am at your service, Mr. Northmour." But I saw, to my surprise, that he had turned his back upon me.

"Do you hear?" I asked.

"Yes," said he, "I do. If you wish to fight, I am ready. If not, go on and save Clara. All is one to me."

I did not wait to be twice bidden; but, stooping again over your mother, continued my efforts to revive her. She still lay white and lifeless; I began to fear that her sweet spirit had indeed fled beyond recall, and horror and a sense of utter desolation seized upon my heart. I called her by name with the most endearing inflections; I chafed and beat her hands; now I laid her head low, now supported it against my knee; but all seemed to be in vain, and the lids still lay heavy on your mother's eyes.

"Northmour," I said, "there is my hat. For God's sake bring some water from the spring."

Almost in a moment he was by my side with the water.

"I have brought it in my own," he said. "You do not grudge me the privilege?"

"Northmour," I was beginning to say, as I laved your mother's head and breast; but he interrupted me savagely.

"Oh, you hush up!" he said. "The best thing you can do is to say nothing."

I had certainly no desire to talk, my mind being swallowed up in concern for my dear love and her condition; so I continued in silence to do my best towards her recovery, and, when the hat was empty, returned it to him, with one word—"More." He had, perhaps, gone several times upon this errand, when your mother reopened her eyes.

"Now," said he, "since she is better, you can spare me, can you not? I wish you a good night, Mr. Cassilis."

And with that he was gone among the thicket. I made a fire for your mother, for I had now no fear of the Italians, who had even spared all the little possessions left in my encampment; and, broken as she was by the excitement and the hideous catastrophe of the evening, I managed, in one way or another—by persuasion, encouragement, warmth, and such simple remedies as I could lay my hand on—to bring her back to some composure of mind and strength of body. We were soon talking, sadly, perhaps, but not unhopefully, of our joint future; and I, with my arm about her waist, sought to inspire her with a sense of help and protection from one who, not only then, but till the day she died, would have joyfully sacrificed his life to do her pleasure.

Day had already come, when a sharp "Hist!" sounded from the thicket. I started from the ground; but the voice of Northmour was heard adding, in the most tranquil tones: "Come here, Cassilis, and alone; I want to show you something."

I consulted your mother with my eyes, and, receiving her tacit permission, left her alone, and clambered out of the den. At some distance

off I saw Northmour leaning against an elder ; and, as soon as he perceived me, he began walking seaward. I had almost overtaken him as he reached the outskirts of the wood.

“Look,” said he, pausing.

A couple of steps more brought me out of the foliage. The light of the morning lay cold and clear over that well-known scene. The pavilion was but a blackened wreck ; the roof had fallen in, one of the gables had fallen out ; and, far and near, the face of the links was cicatrised with little patches of burnt furze. Thick smoke still went straight upwards in the windless air of the morning, and a great pile of ardent cinders filled the bare walls of the house, like coals in an open grate. Close by the islet a schooner yacht lay to, and a well-manned boat was pulling vigorously for the shore.

“The *Red Earl*!” I cried. “The *Red Earl* twelve hours too late!”

“Feel in your pocket, Frank. Are you armed ?” asked Northmour.

I obeyed him, and I think I must have become deadly pale. My revolver had been taken from me.

“You see I have you in my power,” he continued. “I disarmed you last night while you were nursing Clara ; but this morning——here——take your pistol. No thanks !” he cried, holding up his hand. “I do not like them ; that is the only way you can annoy me now.”

He began to walk forward across the links to meet the boat, and I followed a step or two behind. In front of the pavilion I paused to see where Mr. Huddlestone had fallen ; but there was no sign of him, nor so much as a trace of blood.

“Safe in Graden Floe,” said Northmour. “Four minutes and a half, Frank ! And the Italians ? Gone too ; they were night-birds, and they have all flown before daylight.”

He continued to advance till we had come to the head of the beach.

“No further, please,” said he. “Would you like to take her to Graden House ?”

“Thank you,” replied I ; “I shall try to get her to the minister’s at Graden Wester.”

The prow of the boat here grated on the beach, and a sailor jumped ashore with a line in his hand.

“Wait a minute, lads !” cried Northmour ; and then lower and to my private ear : “You had better say nothing of all this to her,” he added.

“On the contrary !” I broke out, “she shall know everything that I can tell.”

“You do not understand,” he returned, with an air of great dignity. “It will be nothing to her ; she expects it of me.”

Thus, my dear children, had your mother exerted her influence for good upon this violent man. Years and years after, she used to call that speech her patent of nobility ; and “she expects it of me” became a

sort of by-word in our married life, and was often more powerful than an argument to mould me to her will.

"Good-bye!" said he, with a nod.

I offered him my hand.

"Excuse me," said he. "It's small, I know; but I can't push things quite so far as that. I don't wish any sentimental business, to sit by your hearth a white-haired wanderer, and all that. Quite the contrary: I hope to God I shall never again clap eyes on either one of you."

"Well, God bless you, Northmour!" I said heartily.

"Oh, yes," he returned. "He'll bless me. You let Him alone."

He walked down the beach; and the man who was ashore gave him an arm on board, and then shoved off and leaped into the bows himself. Northmour took the tiller; the boat rose to the waves, and the oars between the thole-pins sounded crisp and measured in the morning air.

They were not yet half way to the *Red Earl*, and I was still watching their progress, when the sun rose out of the sea.

One word more, and my story is done. Years after, Northmour was killed fighting under the colours of Garibaldi for the liberation of the Tyrol.

R. L. S.

The Homes of Town Poor.

It was, perhaps, the graphic sympathy and pathetic humour of Dickens which set up that action of popular interest in the matter before us which has grown to the dimensions it now exhibits. Since he began to write, fields of paper and ponds of ink have been used to describe the daily surroundings of the million. The pencils of Cruikshank, Leech, and Tenniel have, moreover, pricked many artists with a desire to delineate dilapidated street and indoor scenes, not as mere humorous illustrators of low life, like some sketchers of a former generation, but as protesters against evil, and preachers of painful truth. Even the draughtsmen of the *Police News* seek to divert the eye from artistic deficiencies by a sensational caricaturing of vileness and squalor.

We are indeed so familiar with the printed and illustrated records of slums, cellars, garrets, courts, alleys, arabs, casuals, gutter children, rookeries, and dens, that some people, maybe, hardly think of a poor man's family as free from noisome degradation, and, perhaps, feel somewhat sick of the whole business as testifying to incurable social sores in the body of the people.

But, though the domestic and material condition of very many poor houses is about as bad as it could be, we should be careful not to include the large bulk of the artisans of cities among those who are squalidly lodged. Such as do not personally know the facts of the case would be surprised at the neatness and self-respect evident in a large number of tenements inhabited by the "working classes." Their sense of propriety and social position enables those of whom I am thinking to live and bring up children without being spoiled by narrow accommodation, or becoming debased by the often close contiguity of families which, from one cause or another, have small social shame. Such phrases as the "masses" or the "million" lead us to miss a due perception of that individualism which is characteristic of English people, and to forget that, though cheap streets may be crowded by thousands, the units which compose them are, in many instances, as separate and socially exclusive in their acquaintanceships as the residents in the richer districts of the metropolis.

Thus some might discount their evil estimate of the homes of the town poor by the reflection that a large portion of the so-called poor exhibit a wholesome independence and individual self-respect which enables them to evade the mischief often attendant on narrow domestic accommodation, and surmount the depressing monotony of the streets in which many of the million reside.

Again, excluding the professionally vicious or criminal classes, those who form the stratum above them, and yet below that of the artisan, are mostly characterised by some virtues which are as salt to the carcase of human nature. They are often improvident and slatternly in their ways ; but still they work honestly for their daily bread, are wonderfully patient under their sufferings, and kind to one another in their affliction. Thus, when we face the question of their improvement, we are not only met at once by some phases of worth which should indicate caution in judging our brother, but they present some promising materials on which to work, and hopeful possibilities of social improvement, provided we try to cultivate and educate the good they exhibit, and do not content ourselves by simply condemning whatever wrong they may do.

In speaking of the homes of the town poor, I will not confine myself to the consideration of the cases of those who are most conspicuous for poverty, but look also at the condition of such as come above the squalid classes. These of the better sort, however, are dependent for daily bread upon daily handwork, they have no inherited means of support nor fixed incomes, and thus they are somewhat loosely reckoned as poor.

I have said that the houses of such as these often present evidence of much social and domestic self-respect. But, at the best, they are narrow and cramped, and, though there may be small likelihood of the houses themselves being all replaced by better dwellings, their sanitary condition is capable of much improvement.

It is obvious that dwellings, decent in many respects, may be perniciously bad by reason of defective drains, water supply, and ventilation. No doubt it is in the power of the tenant to complain of defects to the landlord, and, in case of his negligence, to the local sanitary officers. But many, whose tenure is weekly, are content to endure these evils rather than risk a notice to quit for being troublesome.

Local inspectors, moreover, with the best intentions, are sometimes unable to keep their inquisitorial zeal in full blast, and are tempted, in very weariness, to slacken their uninvited visits to houses whose sanitary equipment they have reason to suspect.

There is thus in many places an opening for the amateur who might spy and smell out nuisances. He gets small thanks for this ; but he may do much good, and cheer the honest but weary official.

In asking how such improvements as I am thinking of should be brought about, it may be well to note the truth involved in the familiar phrase "House and Home." When we wish to express the utterness of domestic expulsion, we say that a man is "turned out of house and home." What makes a home ?

In the first place, if any one is seeking to settle down, he does not consider merely the size and kind of building under the roof of which he proposes to live, but its situation.

Its site is of primary importance. This has been prominently felt

and exhibited among the middle and upper classes of cities during the last quarter of a century. In London especially there has been a marked exodus not only to the suburbs, but to those parts of the country most accessible by rail.

The crowds at the metropolitan termini, when the hours of daily business come to an end, are certainly witnesses to the fact that land in the City is too dear to live on, and yet many of the departing multitude take ticket for more than a cheaper site.

They are willing to endure the racket of the train that they may flit beyond the canopy of smoke and hum of traffic into some quiet spot where country scenery may refresh their eyes and nerves, or at least a small garden provide a grateful contrast to the gritty pavement of the streets. And no change of fashion such as that exemplified in the nightly exodus of many into the most accessible parts of the home counties is without its influence on the better sort of artisan. As his wife on Sundays wears a necessarily cheap example of the prevailing bonnet, so, like those who earn more money, he would, if he could, shift his dwelling quarters from the scene of his daily labour. Some, indeed, do thus find a home elsewhere, but by far the larger bulk of this class stay in the dull streets or crowded courts which lie within an easy walk of the spots where they work.

This inability of theirs to share in the evening exodus of workers which has prevailed and is still extending of late years, should give additional point to our perception of the value of open spaces in cities, and make us do our utmost so to adapt and adorn them that working men, as well as resident shopkeepers, might have a chance to sit, in warm weather, somewhere else than in the close room or public-house. Open spaces, suitably laid out, do much towards virtually changing the situation of contiguous dwellings, and make them more like what many desire in a home.

Again, those of the present generation who can afford it generally contrive to break the monotony of continuous residence in town by some occasional or at least yearly outing. This does more than provide the contrast afforded in the temporary leaving of a house. It makes the home, and whatever comfort it may possess, all the more pleasant when the trip is over. I am glad to have noticed among artisans a growing desire for expeditions more free or extended than the dusty jaunt in a van. And those who are interested in the wholesome diversion of such as are poorer than themselves can hardly do a better act of its kind than promote these breaks in the dull round of toil, especially when the trip has a more domestic character than is afforded by an outing along with a number of noisy companions crowded into an excursion train.

The advantages of even a day in the country are much greater when a working man takes his wife and family into it without the accompaniment of a beery band, and the temptation to hang about a rural public-house instead of seeing what the lanes and fields are really like.

Great good may be done by forming a botanical, geological, or entomological class among the younger men, and making explorations with them just beyond the suburbs of cities. The interest then generated, and the revelation of entertainment unassociated with the public-house inevitably tend to enlarge the pleasures of a home to which they bring back their spoils.

This may help to remind us that the idea of a home involves some decorative complement and equipment. No one is content with bare walls and roof, however strong and tight. A mother in a crowded street asked me, the other day, to see the "home" of a daughter who was about to be married. She really meant the furniture which had been gradually collected for the household of the coming pair. They had hired a small house somewhere; but that which was to make it into a "home" was packed in the parental kitchen, and exhibited with pride. How much pleasure a domestic man of the middle class has in adding a tasty piece of furniture, a print, a tea-cup for the shelf, to the equipment of his dwelling! How interested he is in settling where it should be hung, or stand! And, as the sentiment of decoration is shared by many among those who are called poor, it opens a wide field in which the condition of their homes might be improved. It is not wise to scorn cheap ornament, but it is well to help in making it as tasteful and refining as a small purse can command. In this matter I think individual generosity and influence can be exercised with less chance of impertinent interference than in divers other respects. The present even of a few flowers in pots, or cheap though artistic prints for the wall, has none of the degrading flavour of a money donation. It promotes kindness, and sometimes sets up a healthy appreciation of those important trifles which help to mark the distinction between a house and a home.

Again, repose is a condition or factor of the true home. Most houses of the better sort have some room of retreat where the master at least may shield himself from the exuberant spirits of the boys, or the insistence of domestic routine.

His house, moreover, has a nursery and a kitchen. Why should not the working man have some wholesome escape from or alleviation of the pressure involved in the continuous presence of his whole family and its inevitable household processes? As it mostly is, he resorts to the public-house, and it is more easy than just for those who have manifold domestic arrangements and accommodation to blame him for so doing. It has been suggested that a more extended provision of shops in which the men should work by day would sensibly add to the enjoyment of their dwellings. Then a man would experience the sensation of going home when his day's task was done, and not be tempted to escape from its scene the moment he has completed it.

In reference, too, to the alleviation of the mischief arising from having no other convenient resort than the public-house, I hope to see the day when working men's clubs will do much more towards making the defects

of narrow houses or rooms less mischievous than they are now. Youths' institutes, moreover, help sensibly in relieving the internal pressure of poor homes. No animal demands more space than a restless boy. His sprawling spirits and legs interdict repose. Those good people improve homes who provide him with some place where he can shuffle and talk without getting into mischief.

Thus the centrifugal domestic force which often detains the father in the public-house is perceptibly lessened. In providing a retreat for boys they must not, however, be met with too distinct educational proposals. I had for some time a very successful lads' club; and the vehemence with which they let off steam, though they had been at work all day, indicated the importunity with which they would probably have asserted themselves in a small home, and lessened my temptation to blame parents for sending them out of doors to disport themselves unadvisedly elsewhere.

In respect to the cooking, which is an inevitable accompaniment of a household, and which is more grateful in its results than in its procedure, I am inclined to think that considerable improvement might be made in the comfort of small homes by the provision of a number of common kitchens where wives and mothers might not only prepare the family food, but learn how to prepare it better and more cheaply than they do now. The idea is somewhat rudely suggested by the use which is at present made of bakers' ovens; but this use is very uniform and restricted. The pie and the piece of meat set over potatoes seem to exhaust the varieties of a humble meal thus cooked. I should like to see the experiment made of inducing parties of, say, a dozen working men's housewives to meet in an accessible room, and there provide, under instruction, the dinners or suppers of the family.

The home "washing" has in many places been removed to the public washhouse. Why should not some arrangement of a similar kind be made for the cooking of food? Let there be different dinners provided on successive days, all clubbing for the food and fuel. A pair of scales would ensure the taking away by each of a proportionate dish of the result. At first some instruction would be needed in the suitable preparation of various kinds of cheap food; but a party might soon learn how to cook a set of different dishes, and then the most skilled might act as forewoman. I cannot help thinking that some such plan might issue not only in spreading the knowledge of economical and toothsome cookery, but in relieving the narrow home from the potter of culinary preparation, and in some measure from the distasteful sequence of washing up.

In thinking of the indirect and circumstantial improvement of many of the existing homes of the poor which are not likely to be replaced by better dwellings, I might, if space allowed me, say much on the spread of sanitary truths, and especially on the need for better knowledge how to tend those sick who are not removed to a public hospital.

The local lectures which are given under the auspices of the National

Health Society, and in London the domestic instruction as well as ministrations afforded by the Metropolitan and National Nursing Association, are already doing something to bring comfort into the homes of those whose condition I am considering.

To what I have said about their indirect improvement, I will add only one general reflection. In wealthier families there can be no domestic lapse without some perceptible discomfiture or distress; but it generally takes a long time or some great social failure to break up the household. The sons may vex their parents by dissipation, the extravagance of some member of the family may shrink the income at its disposal, the master may incur losses, the mistress may be long laid upon a sick bed, the children may be hard to rear; but all these drawbacks do not radically disturb the routine of domestic life. There may be a servant the less kept, the carriage may have to be put down, fewer entertainments may be given, the household may have to fall back upon half-pay, as it were, and yet it may be held together. That condition of failure may not be reached which involves disruption and dispersal.

But it takes a very little to drag a poor home below a tolerable level. There the border between comfort and ruin is very narrow. The intemperance or sickness of a parent immediately tells. Even a little carelessness and improvidence makes a great difference in the condition of a family. And when the action of decay is set up it is rapid; the process of decline becomes accelerated. The household loses heart as it feels itself sinking in the mire. And thus such as are able and willing to improve the homes of their poorer fellows indirectly should be quick to help, not necessarily in money, but in sympathy, where sorrow, sickness, or loss threatens to drop the household through the thin ice on which it stands. Such aid is infinitely more hopeful than that given to a family habituated to degradation and dependence, however deeply the would-be helper is pained by the sight of its squalor.

I must, however, now pass on to look not so much at the bettering of existing homes as at the replacement of many of them by improved dwellings. It is promising to perceive the great readiness with which these are hired by artisans. The rooms in a new block are sometimes engaged before the building is finished. The provision and acceptance of these testify to a general advance in the appreciation of that which marks a home. I will not now furnish any collection of statistics about this indication of the enlargement of domestic ideas. It is enough for my purpose to notice that large structures, containing many distinct sets of rooms, each fitted with wholesome and decent sanitary arrangements, have arisen and are arising over the whole metropolitan area. It is to be hoped that these will prove to be "sporadic," and an immense change be thus produced in the homes of the London poor. Many influences are at work to promote this. There is a general advance in social requirements.

It needs an effort to realise what some of the elders of the present

middle classes can remember as being once tolerated in their homes and domestic habits. The old four-post bedstead, in some instances, seems to have been accepted as the representative of a sleeping apartment, and tubs, not so very long ago, almost indicated eccentricity.

The change, to which the modern fittings and furniture of the better sort of houses bear witness, has not been without its effect on the artisan class, and it is probable that an accelerated impulse will soon be given to this by education. It is not merely that they are being better educated, but the tone and character of the teaching they receive more and more familiarise them with educated language, and the fastidiousness as well as the wider range of information and thought which it involves.

They are necessarily getting to read books, periodicals, and newspapers, the style of which assumes such an acquaintance with the refinements of life as their fathers knew little and cared less about. This will make them discontented with many of their circumstances, and probably one shape of the discontent generated will be a wholesome desire for better surroundings at home. Moreover, children who have become accustomed to the structural luxuries of board and other new schools will, as they pass on to form the next generation of working people, grow dissatisfied with many of their present houses, and create a demand for a revolution in domestic circumstances with which their parents were contented.

The most important factor in the process of improved dwellings is the discovery that they can be made to pay. Charity could never overtake and remove the domestic sumptuary evils of all the houses inhabited by the town poor. It has, indeed, led the way in showing how decently and conveniently large numbers of families can be lodged on small sites, and in so doing has afforded an excellent example of that phase of itself which begins at home.

The work to be done, however, involves the provision of houses for many who earn good wages, and are comparatively well off. And, if it were possible, it would not be economically wholesome for these to be lodged mainly out of the donations of others, collected with all the parade of charitable association. Such a proceeding would spread a degrading sense of dependence. But when we find some building companies which replace defective dwellings of the London poor able to pay their shareholders a fair percentage for their money, we may confidently accept the fact that a reforming action has been set up which wants only time in order to produce excellent results. We may hope, moreover, that the better sort of the working classes will justify some of the indications which they have exhibited, and take the matter more in hand themselves. They have shown that they can do much in divers ways by co-operation, and the same business powers which have produced their own factories and stores elsewhere ought to enable them to aid materially in providing themselves with better homes in the metropolis.

Critics have, of course, been ready to decry some of the results which

have been already reached. But it was in the nature of things that mistakes should be made in the structural arrangements of the earliest dwelling blocks erected. Those, *e.g.*, which have been built in the form of a square, enclosing within high walls a deep tank of still air, are obviously ill-equipped for ventilation, and have been found to retain epidemics with provoking tenacity. The children, moreover, living in the upper flats of some are said to be deprived of much of the exercise which they need, being kept too much within doors and unable to turn out with ease for that noisy play in the streets which moves the pity of some who compare the scene of their romps with green fields, but which indubitably they seem to enjoy, and which, in spite of some drawbacks, does them infinite good. I think, however, that the immediate neighbourhood of a block of improved dwellings generally shows that large numbers of their little folk contrive to get down to mother earth and engage with sufficient energy in cat, whipping top, buttons, marbles, or battledore and shuttlecock, or whatever some mysterious law decides shall rule the pursuit of some hundreds of thousands of children with unconcerted unanimity.

Again, a gloomy, cavernous common passage or staircase to a dozen sets of rooms is likely, especially in long, dark evenings, to facilitate ruder acquaintanceships among the bigger boys and girls than the elders of their families desire. But the defects which I have noticed have been perceived and have not been repeated in the later dwellings which have been erected. There are more galleries for the airing and exercise of the smaller children, and the passages are more public and better lit. The best buildings, too, are so arranged that the rooms are capable of being swept by what the sedentary artisan dislikes—a thorough draught; and one great drawback to low and thin roofed houses—I mean that arising from the heat in summer—is obviously absent. Certainly, no one can have left London on a roasting July afternoon, perhaps for some cool and pleasant country retreat, and seen from the window of the railway carriage the “shimmer” of heated atmosphere hovering over acres of tile and slate without thinking of the intolerable condition of the chambers immediately beneath them. Their inmates are baked in summer and frozen in winter. These evils are certainly obviated when the upper heat and cold are kept out of almost all the rooms by others above them, and the top floor is substantially covered in.

Looking at what has been done and is in progress, we may believe that a great advance is taking place in the lodgment of artisans. But few of the improved dwellings supply the needs of that class which has most conspicuously drawn public attention to the state of the homes of the town poor. The rents in the newly-erected blocks are generally too high for these.

I am not going to add another to the many descriptions of the dwellings of those who may most correctly be reckoned as poor. I mean such as have learnt no handicraft, but live by unskilled labour

which, however valuable in one sense, is poorly paid. The condition of these is depressed everywhere; but in large cities, especially in London, it is sometimes exceptionally distressed; for they naturally gravitate to the cheapest and therefore the worst houses.

This has led to the acquisition or retention of the most rotten tenements by speculators who have calculated on the inability of their tenants to compel them to spend money on repairs, on the certainty that the poorest of the poor must lodge somewhere, and on the belief that, by crowding them together, those who pay some rent will make up for the deficiencies of those who pay none. The result has been an almost incredible increase of sickness in some districts, even without the scourge of any epidemic. Many houses are a protest against health. Let the dwellers in them be ever so provident and temperate, the decay, closeness, surroundings, and equipment of their dwellings inevitably shorten their lives, and especially those of their children.

But when we glance at the great curse of cities—I mean intemperance in drink—another consideration comes in. No doubt drunkenness makes homes bad, but bad homes directly promote drunkenness. The exhausted nervous condition in which a man wakes who has slept in a foul atmosphere creates such craving for a stimulant as those who breathe sweet air can hardly conceive. And when a man has drunk a glass of gin in the morning he feels the better for it. Sometimes he cannot eat till he has thus put the spur of spirit to his powers. And how can we expect an uneducated sufferer, conscious of relief from alcohol, to check himself in that launch into intemperance which is provided by the vileness of the dwelling in which he lives, or even to drag himself out of it as soon as he is transferred to a more wholesome building? It is to the squalor of many ill-called homes that we may attribute the habits which make them even worse than they originally are. And, as the great stern laws of life are thus broken, the transgressor suffers physically; but he is morally less culpable than the sensual who know the law of the Creator and do it not. To those, indeed, who are well nurtured and housed, and can see the state into which large numbers of their fellow-children of God are reduced by their ill nurture and housing, is the Divine canon specially applicable—“Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.”

The conscience of the richer and better educated sort has now been moved, and has taken a legislative shape. But, as it might have been expected, the first touch of the machinery for removing the evil we deplore has made the condition of the sufferers worse. No doubt the great hindrance to improvement was, a few years ago, the tenacity with which the owners of the worst tenements were enabled to defy attempts to replace or improve them. But since the passing of the Artisans' Dwellings Act, 1868, best known as Mr. Torrens's, and later still, and charged with much wider power, that of Mr. Cross in 1875, one great obstacle, in London at least—viz. the want of sites, or the inability to secure them—has been removed.

An unhealthy district may now be scraped bare. It is easier, however, to pull down than to build up ; and, as you cannot demolish poor people when you destroy poor houses, at first and for a time the evils that need cure are condensed by the closer packing of those who are evicted. This is an inevitable accompaniment of social reform. We must not condemn the broom because it raises the dust, which flies thickest when we begin to sweep. Those, however, who lament the condition of the homes of the poorest of the town poor may rejoice that an active clearance has been set up, though, in approaching order, a phase and a period of exaggerated disorder and discomfort may have to be passed through.

The question is, how to replace the dwellings which are removed, and which at any rate had the recommendation of cheapness, with such as shall not exclude the most needy among the people by the rent which must be paid. The provision of improved dwellings for the artisan class may comparatively be left to the procedure of those who find it answer to erect such buildings as are needed for the better sort of working people. It is the supply of cheaper dwellings presenting the lowest standard of habitability compatible with decent sanitary conditions, that chiefly concerns the philanthropist. I am not, indeed, without hope that the belief of many in the possibility of making such dwellings pay as investments is founded on fact, though at present more directly remunerative schemes are most attractive to some capitalists. The main thing to be insisted on is that they shall be built as cheaply as possible, without ambitious ornamentation and excess of fittings, which assume the access of sudden and great improvement in the domestic habits of such as are intended to occupy them. The severest suppression of optimism and decorative desire is needed in the architect who shall design these lodgings for the poorest of the poor.

Meanwhile these ill-lodged or evicted people are proper objects of structural charity. There are, indeed, in London special means for the promotion of this, if they could be so applied. I allude to many of the old City charities. If those among them for which, even with the greatest ingenuity in construing the terms upon which they are left, it is sometimes extremely difficult to find anywise suitable recipients, could be used in the provision of improved dwellings on a large scale, the least degrading and pauperising charity would be exercised. It has been calculated, I believe by Sir Sydney Waterlow, that if the old City charities were capitalised they would produce the large sum of two millions sterling ; with which he would undertake by degrees the replacement of the great bulk of the poorest people's houses in London.

In thinking, moreover, of any improvement in the dwellings of the poorest, it must not be forgotten that the influence I have noticed as arising from education in the artisan class must eventually tell upon those whose indifference to it has necessitated the making of their education compulsory. On these the board schools operate, not merely as vehicles of instruction, but as instruments tending eventually to make

the children who are obliged to attend them ashamed of the domestic and sanitary conditions under which they have been born. As I have previously intimated, the contrast between the order, cleanliness, and architectural authority of these elaborate buildings and the rotten holes whence they issue to enter them must tell with multiplied force upon their poorest scholars. I know, indeed, that it is the fashion among some to decry the board schools as palaces absurdly unfitted for the instruction of gutter children, as they are rudely called; but, in measuring the value of a school, we must not stop at the mere reading, writing, and summing, which can be conducted within the meanest walls. The fabric itself must have an appreciable effect upon those who spend many of their youngest days under its shelter.

The consciousness of having been brought into contact with strong corporate educational life, and the taste of association with the widely known colleges of Cambridge and Oxford, have done more for the social position of many University men than the classical learning which they may have acquired within its walls; and even with the poorest a grand building, in which the whole instructive force of a city is interested, may, though scarcely realised at the time, tend to make its scholars dissatisfied with the narrow accommodation and social state which their parents endured. I am shrewdly tempted to distrust contentment with our lot, especially among the poor. Contentment may be desirable under some circumstances; but, if we are bidden to do our duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call us, one obvious duty of the poor is to protest against the state in which many of them are placed by defective civilisation. If we get a class radically dissatisfied with circumstances which all agree are mischievous, we may reasonably hope for the birth of a will which shall promote a way. Thus "contentment with their lot" is about one of the lowest lessons which a parson or anybody else can teach among those who inhabit the worst among the homes of town poor.

It may be, moreover, that enforced familiarity with the discipline and corporate procedure of a large good school will reveal to some who frequent it the advantages of corporate action, and set up a co-operative movement even among the poorest. But we may not hope too much from this as yet. Though many artisans combine for divers objects, and may reasonably be expected or advised to join in the provision of better homes for themselves, a great bulk of especially the London poor is a layer of sand, without at present any symptom of coherence; and it is characterised mainly by the disposition of sand to settle down into the lowest holes it can find. Often it can be extricated and lifted from these only in handfuls.

This fact opens the door to a very useful phase of ministration which, properly exercised, shall hurt neither in the giving nor receiving. I mean that of which, in London, Miss Octavia Hill has been the leader and prophetess—the supervision of very cheap dwellings by educated

people. Here the ministrant may present himself or herself as a collector of rents, and by kindly tact do much to kindle a higher sense of social position among the genuine poor. It is not everybody who can help directly in legislation, or even in the vigorous thrusting forward of great sanitary measures ; but if any one wishes to do good which shall test the patience of the doer, and yet involve no very long link between the act and the result, he may try his hand at the supervision I have alluded to. The qualification for such work is not any bustling confidence and a sense that the supervisor is able to set others right, but, combined with accurate business habits, an incurable and tender shyness which shall keep the visitor from offence ; for it must be remembered that in calling upon the poor, especially with the conscious intention of bettering their condition, more care and consideration are needed than in visiting equals in social position.

Infinite harm has been done by such as think that because they happen to have more money—though, perhaps, they would be found useless if they were stripped and pitchforked into the labour market—they are therefore qualified to lecture people with the smallest incomes. This harm has extended beyond the individuals who may have been directly subjected to intrusive admonition. Many have silently contracted a sentiment of aversion to advice, simply because it has often been tendered impertinently to their class by self-chosen philanthropists. The meanest home is some Englishman's or Englishwoman's castle, though its defences be in ruins.

I have only one more word to add to these imperfect sentences. We must suspiciously avoid the cant of sanitary beneficence, and bear in mind that, after all said and done, the house does not inevitably make the man. No doubt the improvement of poor dwellings produces some social advance in those who occupy them ; but there are good people in bad houses as well as bad people in good ones, and some well equipped and endowed homes are a reproach to a people. There are influences higher and more divine than such as appeal to the possession of a separate set of rooms with a private dustbin, and pretty prints upon the wall. The patriarch's tent has exhibited grander specimens of man than the palace of the Sultan ; and Lazarus himself, whom I imagine to have been no mere saint in rags, has been spoken of with infinite tenderness by One to whom the redressing of wrongs and the estimates of social worth showed themselves with the widest and deepest insight into man and his necessities.

HARRY JONES.

Foreign Orders.

THE most famous of all foreign orders of knighthood is the Golden Fleece. It was founded by Philip, Duke of Burgundy and Earl of Holland, styled "the Good," possibly because he murdered several of his nearest relatives. However, Philip meant well, according to his dim notions of right, and really governed his subjects pretty fairly. On January 10, 1429, he founded the famous order which is inseparably associated with his name. Some ninety years after our Edward III. instituted the more renowned order of the Garter.

The name of the Golden Fleece had a twofold signification. It meant to typify the spirit of chivalrous adventure—of going into new lands to conquer new fame—the same spirit which actuated the Argonauts of legend, who went in search of the Golden Fleece. But there was also the religious idea. The Saviour has been represented under the form of a lamb. To win His redemption by "knightly" deeds, in the best signification of that noble word, was obviously an object of the new society of chivalry.

High privileges were early conferred on the Knights of the Fleece, whose number was originally limited to thirty-one. When the Counts of Egmont and Horn were illegally executed under the reign of Philip II. on account of the stand they made for the liberties of their country, they both appealed against the sentence, alleging, amongst other reasons, that, as Knights of the Fleece, they had the right to be tried by their brother knights.

After the war of the Spanish succession, which left a Bourbon on the throne of Spain, there arose a dispute between the emperor and the king of Spain as to which of them had the right to the sovereignty of the order. The question is an extremely complicated one. The Emperor Charles VI., as heir male of the Hapsburgs, might fairly claim the knightly heritage as his right. On the other hand, Philip of Bourbon might urge descent through an heiress, and plead that in Spain and the Low Countries the Salic law had never been recognised. The matter was finally arranged through treaty, the emperor and the King of Spain being recognised as joint grand masters of the order, with equal power to name knights. The Austrian and Spanish badges of the order are almost, though not quite, identical in form. Each has the well-known collar of gold and flint-stones, with the typical device, "Ante ferit quam flamma micat," though the nobler legend runs—"Pretium non vile laborum."

The Archdukes of Austria and the Infants of Spain are all, as a rule, Knights of the Fleece. In later years the order has been conferred with

what must to heralds have appeared undue freedom. For instance, on M. Thiers, who was not even "noble," and indeed had the sole merit of being President of the French Republic, and one of the greatest men living. Then it was that political oddity called the Spanish Republic, which bestowed the distinction of the little red collar-riband on M. Thiers. The Duke of Aosta, by the way, while figuring as Amadeus I. of Spain, sent the Fleeco to a distinguished Castilian nobleman, who returned the decoration without a word. It is a waste of words to characterise the conduct of this grandeza as it deserves. Why the foreign house of Savoy should be less entitled to respect than the foreign house of France it would be difficult to explain.

The Prince of Wales is a knight of the Golden Fleece—the only Englishman who enjoys that distinction. The Spanish order was conferred on him when he was ten years old, the Austrian some time later. Not long ago it was whispered that His Catholic Majesty was rather anxious for an exchange of ribands between the courts of S. Ildefonso and St. James'. He wanted the Garter for himself, and would have conferred the Fleece on the Duke of Edinburgh, or on Prince Albert Victor of Wales—perhaps on both—to secure for himself the most coveted of all decorations, without which no sovereign feels that he belongs to the inner circle of royalty.

Were the old Court of France still existing, and Henry V. determined to maintain the old orders, that of the Holy Ghost would come next in importance to the Golden Fleece. The order is not actually extinct, for the king is naturally always Grand Master, and the Duke of Nemours is an ordinary knight—the last surviving one. The last but one, the Duke of Mortemart, died a few years ago.

The order of the Holy Ghost was not founded till the sixteenth century, but it very soon attained to almost the prestige of the more ancient institutions. It was conferred on ecclesiastics as well as laymen; and a bishop, accused of some high misdemeanour, and commanded in consequence to deliver up his blue riband (blue was the colour of the order) was not afraid to reply, "Take not thou thy Holy Spirit from me."

In a later age, a marshal of France, a notorious trimmer in politics, caused some amusement to his friends by the nice scruples which marked his conduct during the events of July and August, 1830. "But," exclaimed an old Legitimist marquis, aghast, "is this true they tell me, that you actually called on the Duke of Orleans?" "It is true," answered the marshal, "but I was careful to wear my blue riband when I called." With the abdication of Charles X. nominations to the order ceased, as did also those to the order of St. Louis. Louis-Philippe contented himself with upholding the Legion of Honour.

This most popular of modern decorations was instituted by Napoleon I. while he was still First Consul. The intention was sufficiently obvious. The idea of hereditary aristocracy had been too discredited in France for

the system to be revived. The next possible check against democracy was an aristocracy the members of which should be named for life. The French seem to have accepted the creation of this privileged society without much difficulty. They had the wit to perceive that it did not in itself militate against the principle of equality. No one was born with a right to the order ; any citizen might hope to attain it ; no man could bequeath it to his descendants.

The order originally consisted of four classes, afterwards of five, the number at which it now stands. There are—1st, the Knights Grand Cross ; 2nd, Grand Officers ; 3rd, Commanders ; 4th, Officers ; 5th, simple Knights or Chevaliers. When Napoleon first established the order (1802) the concordat with Rome had not yet been signed. In fact the Christian calendar was only re-introduced on January 1, 1806. Knights Grand "Cross" were impossible at that epoch ; and Knights Grand "Eagle" was the original designation of members of the first grade in the legion. To this day, the so-called "cross" is a star of five rays.

Considerable discussion arose, on the formation of the order, as to the colour of the riband. Napoleon was for white, probably because on state occasions he loved to dress in scarlet, and saw how happy would be the contrast between the two colours. It was represented to him, however, that white was pre-eminently the colour of the exiled house. It seems difficult to imagine why Bonaparte should have hesitated to adopt the colour when he had usurped the throne. The fact remains that he did hesitate. He then suggested red, and was met with the objection that red was the revolutionary colour. The First Consul now grew tired of the discussion ; he never could argue calmly for long. Maybe he was too busy. Blue was the colour of most uniforms in the French army, and red would do capitally as a contrast ; so red was chosen.

In the last days of the Second Empire the Legion of Honour consisted of some 60,000 persons. Within a few months of the proclamation of the Third Republic, the National Assembly passed a law imposing certain restrictions on the creation of fresh members. By the principal clause it was enacted that only one member should be named to fill every two vacancies.

In speaking of the numbers of the Legion, one ought to bear one or two facts in mind. France has no peerage officially recognised, or baronetage ; while the conferring of knighthood would be a ceremony almost unintelligible to the majority of educated Frenchmen. Several other fashions in which the British Sovereign delights to honour her lieges, e.g., by making them honorary Privy Councillors, or of "her Counsel learned in the law," are wholly unknown to our neighbours. The "Cross," and after it, the successive grades of the Legion, are the sole honours with which France can reward the most illustrious of her sons ; the sole outward and visible rewards. Praise to the living and posthumous renown she accords more generously than any other nation ; and it is no empty phrase that is inscribed on the *façade* of the Pantheon, and which

bids each successive generation remember that to great men the fatherland which bore them is grateful.

It is worth noting, too, that we English seem to have acquired, in respect of decorations, the appetite that comes from eating. Every one knows the story of the British ambassador who appeared at a conference without a single star amongst his bejewelled colleagues ; and how a fool pointed out the circumstance to Talleyrand, thinking he had "scored off" our envoy ; and how the Frenchman contented himself with remarking that the Englishman's dress was certainly very neat. But we have changed all that. Lord Dufferin, in full dress, would wear three stars ; Lords Lyons and Odo Russell two apiece. We have a perfect constellation of Royal and Imperial orders in these days—from the Garter conferred for wealth to the Victoria Cross conferred for valour.

Still it must be admitted that all our G.C.B.'s, G.C.S.I.'s, &c., put together, would not equal in number the knights of the Legion of Honour. Only the figures are not quite so disproportionate as might be imagined. The Prince of Wales is naturally a Grand Cross of the Legion, as he is Grand Cross of everything else under the sun. The Duke of Cambridge also enjoys this distinction. Very few Frenchmen, indeed, enjoy the distinction (which only half corresponds to it) of Grand Cross of the Bath. Amongst them are Marshals MacMahon and Canrobert, and Prince Napoleon. Old Pelissier got it after the fall of Malakoff, and was so proud of the honour that for some time after he was wont to sign "Pelissier, G.C.B."

Perhaps, after all, the rough soldier meant to pay a compliment to the allies of his country. If so, a *grand seigneur* of the time of Louis XIV. could scarcely have conceived a more delicate one.

The badges of the inferior orders of the Legion have been pretty eagerly sought after by foreigners, even by Englishmen. It is related of an English merchant, who had rendered some service to Napoleon III., that he was invited by that prince to spend a few days at Fontainebleau. When the merchant took his leave, the Emperor asked him whether he could be of service to him in any way. "May it please Your Majesty," stammered the guest, "I should like—the Legion of Honour." Repressing the national habit of shrugging his shoulders—ever so slightly—Caesar replied that he should be most happy to give him the Cross. "I fancied," he added, "that your Government did not allow you to wear foreign decorations. However, if you can make it right with the English Administration, you are heartily welcome. Meanwhile you must permit me to give you a Cross of the Legion worn by my uncle, the King of Westphalia." So saying, the Emperor went to a drawer and took out a diamond star that had once glittered on the Marshal's uniform of Jerome. It was handsomely done : grave as were his faults, Napoleon III. always showed himself a gentleman.

The Legion of Honour has this agreeable peculiarity, that it is accompanied by pensions—in the case of military knights. A plain

chevalier receives 250 francs a year: a Grand Cross 5,000. The Chancellorship of the order is a very snug berth indeed. Besides a fine income, the Chancellor has handsome apartments rent free and "perquisites." Of course, the post is generally bestowed on an old soldier: though on the restoration of the Bourbons in 1814, it was given to an eminent clergyman whom it had been found difficult to put in any other place. The porter of the palace caused some amusement by addressing the Abbé, on his official entry, in the set phrase which he had used towards successive captains of great fame: "You have only to command, Marshal: it will be my business to obey."

There is one other French order of importance: the military medal. It is of gold, encircled in silver, and suspended by a short riband of green and yellow. Coveted almost as much as our Victoria Cross, its numbers have been extended so as to include civilians: the proportion being one of the latter to every two soldiers or sailors. When Bazaine had been for some time a Marshal of France, and Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, he received the military medal: a graceful compliment, which was meant to indicate that the cup of his honours was full, and that there was nothing left for his imperial master but to give him the remainder of the lesser decorations.

The principal Austrian Orders, after the Fleece, are the Military Order of "Maria Theresa," founded by that princess in 1757; of "St. Stephen," by the same Sovereign, in 1764; of "Leopold" (1808); "Iron Crown" (founded by Napoleon, as King of Italy, and re-established by Francis I. of Austria in 1816); Order of "Francis Joseph" (1849); and last, but not least, the Order of the Starred Cross (*Croix étoilée*) for ladies. Those who are in the inner circle of English society know full well the value that is attached to the Royal Order of Victoria and Albert: but English ladies can be happy enough without it. An Austrian "court-capable" princess would hardly consider that her coronet fitted her comfortably without the Starred Cross to match it.

Austrian orders are freely bestowed: for an excellent reason. The House of Hapsburg-Lorraine has little else to give. An English gentleman once called on a foreign General, who was his friend, and found him in boisterous spirits. "George," exclaimed the soldier, "they've given me the Elizabeth"! (a minor military decoration). The Englishman offered formal congratulations; but knowing something of the relative significance of orders, and remembering that, as it was, the General could scarcely find room on his coat for the many stars and crosses he had won, wore a somewhat puzzled look. "I see you don't understand," the General suddenly cried out; "my dear fellow, they've given me the last remaining order: the next time they *must* out with their snuff-boxes, which are as good as money."*

The principal Prussian order is that of the Black Eagle, to which

* Blücher is sometimes cited as the hero of this anecdote, sometimes Radetzky, sometimes Lüders.

most princes of great reigning houses belong. The last English prince invested with the riband was the Duke of Connaught. At Prince Leopold's next visit to Berlin, he too will receive the distinction—not one to be despised. The Black Eagle was founded by Frederic, Elector of Brandenburg, on his assuming the style of King of Prussia, as "Frederic I." (January 18, 1701). Frederic the Great, after the conquest of Silesia, made the Archbishop of Breslau a Knight of the Order. The first time Frederic was defeated by the Austrians, this rash prelate publicly plucked the star of the Black Eagle from his breast, and flung it to the ground. Frederic won a battle soon after; and the Archbishop was in his power. But the King took no further notice of His Grace's action than to observe "he was like all the rest."

The Red Eagle is to the Black what the Bath is to the Garter. The former are conferred for merit: the latter in acknowledgment of the claims of birth, backed by respectability of conduct.

The Order of Merit (civil division) is one of the most interesting. The Knights elect members with the approbation of the King: though, of course, His Majesty's pleasure is virtually paramount. Most Englishmen will be of opinion that Prussia shows catholicity as well as excellence of taste in having chosen two men so great, and yet so diverse in every respect, as Macaulay and Carlyle, to be members of her literary and artistic Senate.

The famous Order of the Iron Cross was founded by King Frederic William III. in 1813—in the very midst of the death-struggle with Napoleon. At that time some Prussian ladies vowed that they would wed none but Knights of the Iron Cross; and one lady at least was true to her oath. She received numerous and advantageous offers of marriage, and declined them all because the requisite condition had not been fulfilled. She it was who, in the dark hour of her country's fate, cast around to see what she might do to serve her people. Money was needed above all things: that she well understood. And as she had no money, she bethought her of her beautiful hair; and went and sold it, and paid the money into the national fund.

Russia boasts the Orders of St. Andrew (founded by Peter the Great in 1698)—the Russian Garter; St. Catherine, by the same prince (for ladies); St. Alexander Newski, also by Peter; the White Eagle, a Polish order, said to have been instituted by Ladislaus IV. in 1325; the St. Anne, a German order, the sovereignty of which has descended to the Czar from the House of Sleswick-Holstein; the St. Stanislaus; the St. George, and the St. Wladimir.

Russians do not understand laughter on the subject of tinsel. At the beginning of this century, a Muscovite review gravely compared the merits of a couple of poetasters, and finally decided in favour of the worst, on the strength of the fact that he had been decorated with nine orders, whereas the other had received but seven. This may be styled criticism made easy.

Apropos :—After the conspiracy of the Decembrists (1825) had been put down, a young man was being tried before a court-martial. The poor lad, who really meant no harm to anybody, but had simply the misfortune to be a fool, could find no happier way of defending himself than to cite passages from Milton, Locke, and Bentham, in vindication of the presumed rights of humanity. The General who presided looked half mournfully, half comically at the prisoner, and at length delivered himself to this effect :—“ Young man, I see you have read many books written, I doubt not, by clever men. Still, they did not understand that it is necessary to believe in God, and to be loyal to one's Sovereign. Now, see to what these books have brought you. There are you, in that melancholy position : and now, look at me.” So saying, the General placed his hand on an embroidered coat, thickly adorned with decorations. The story is Russian : but there is a spicie of truth in it.

The present writer wishes he could continue the story in the proper fashion, and tell how the General was obliged to pass sentence of death, but recommended a free pardon. Unfortunately, evidence is wanting. The odds are even against the General's having been a man of wit.

Few other foreign orders are worth mentioning ; though there are a few, besides those already mentioned, which confer some distinction on the wearer : notably that of “ Charles III.” of Spain ; “ St. Januarius,” of the extinct Kingdom of the Two Sicilies ; “ the Golden Spur,” or St. Sylvester, of the Vatican ; and the “ Lion and Sun ” of Persia.

This last order was created in 1808, as a measure of propitiation towards England. The King of Persia of the day had founded an order in honour of the French, when he had reason to think that Napoleon was all-powerful. As soon as the Shah discovered that he had calculated somewhat amiss, he instituted a new order to please, as he fondly deemed, the enemies of the French Emperor. The “ Lion and Sun,” which was suggested by Sir John Malcolm during his mission to Tehraun, has this peculiarity, that when it is conferred on a foreign officer he is entitled to wear the insignia of the higher grades of the order as he rises in rank in his own country. A simple knighthood may have been conferred on a captain : should he rise to be a general, he may wear the ribbon and star of Grand Cross.

Falling in Love.

"FALLING in love" is a very old-fashioned, rather rustic phrase, but there is no improving upon it in our homely tongue for telling what happens whenever the mutual charm of the sexes starts into play between two persons. The event itself has always maintained a primitive simplicity, and these sly syllables befittingly relating it keep fresh from generation to generation a bit of ancient boisterousness that they have. No one can either speak them or hear them without a smile. The mirthfulness of the expression seems to lie in its verbal violence, which somehow hints a helpless sheepishness in the parties. Whenever this phrase is used of a pair of human beings, it is, in fact, known that they have been carried away, taken possession of, made fools of by a natural weakness, which overtakes everybody in turn. It must be the affording a new proof of the irresistibleness of love that makes the joke; for all other languages as well as our own introduce a precipitous, headlong word in their most popular description of the occurrence.

This is saying that the common judgment everywhere in its most familiar talk will have it that the very beginning of love is a catastrophe. Yet, although the whole world is forced to witness to the fatal seriousness of the affair, by a strange light-heartedness all men and women make fun of it. Even the couple to whom it has happened, and who are consequently at that moment standing in the worst jeopardy of fortune, with the whole course of their life risked on the perils of a more or less haphazard choice, can only be grave about it between themselves, and when they are quite apart. Let them admit any third person into a knowledge of the matter, and instantly they must themselves treat it as a joke. Indeed, they have shamefacedly to hurry to join in the laughter which is sure to be raised at their cost. The poets, it is true, especially the lyrists, who are always in league with the lovers—being indeed, excepting for only the shortest intervals of luxurious despair, reckonable conspicuously among them—try to keep a solemn face in speaking of love. But only these queer individuals can do it. According to them, nothing in all the world ought to be so pathetically interesting as a couple of woopers fixed in one of their attitudes of mutual enchantment. It is, however, only for the briefest instant that the poets and artists can, here and there, keep separate persons, or most solitary youthful pairs, in any mood of gravity upon this topic. The great experienced public goes on from age to age perpetually laughing at love in one united chorus. It finds, indeed, a great part of the standing challenge to mirth in the poetical attempt to make the thing seem serious.

At first sight, there certainly is something puzzling in the fact that in a world philosophically reputed to be so sad as this one is, the most important affair in it should be universally laughable. But there is no doubting it. Is there any one who can possibly behold a couple of lovers absorbed in reciprocal endearments without being amused by the sight? Even where the infatuation has the best of auspices; where youth and beauty soften, or it may be naturally embellish, the eagerness; and if the prepsterous overstress of mutual personal admiration is made a little less absurd by grace of speech and elegance of manner, a spectator is still obliged to smile. Those who have themselves already fully gone through the experience, and with whom it has turned out ill, can laugh cynically if they like, but laugh in one way or another everybody must. In the very manners and procedure of love there is inescapable drollery; its forms are so primitive that everybody is aware it is the most antique joke of all that is being carried on. A male arm around a female waist is to any strange observer the one lasting comic attitude of the sexes. Nothing but the most infantile years in the tiniest of couples can save those detected in it from being aware that they are humiliatingly diverting; and then, indeed, by some odd contrariety of feeling, tears may be started instead of laughter. One or other sort of hysterics it is sure to prompt. But if the pair of embracers are past youthfulness, then the spectacle becomes farcical. A little obesity is all that is needed at any age to make the beholding wildly titillating, unless the amusement miscarries through some unhappy stirring of disgust. In this way everybody is made ridiculous in turn by love; but what a dull world it would be with no love-making going forward in it! By means of this lackadaisical behaviour of wooers, the human scene is kept filled in all its corners and nooks with cheaply-offered humorous idylls. You can catch glimpses of them from out of the very thick of business, from off the most beaten highways of life; and the sight always refreshes. For one thing, neither the watching nor the enacting of the play tasks observers or actors in the least. A blush is enough to give its fun; when the situation grows most critical, a stammer is the piquantest of jokes; a little sentimental attitudinising is all the business needed; the detection of a covert grip of the hands between the half-hiding pair, or even the casual witnessing of a look of languish, will serve as a climax, causing no end of perfect mirth in any number of sly onlookers. It is owing to everybody at some time taking part in the comedy that all can so easily follow and understand it seen by momentary glimpses, listened to by snatches, no matter how hastily, at any stage of its progress. There is no one who cannot foresee the plot. Even the youngest innocents are found to have picked up fragments of the traditional words and gestures, beginning, it would seem, to learn them as early as the first dalliances of the mother's lap.

So far, we have been speaking quite generally; treating of love-making in the abstract, as one might say. But if you go to individual cases the puzzle of falling in love grows more and more preposterously entertain-

ing. It does so owing to its being utterly impossible to understand why, even in the most genuine instances of all, any particular couple were drawn together with such violence. For the most part, they themselves are the very last people to know any definite reason for it. Some one who is only half thinking the matter out may, perhaps, mechanically suggest "reciprocal discovery of beauty?" But the cases in which that can be held to apply are by no means the most striking examples of falling in love. It is true no one exactly knows what is and what is not charming to some eyes; but assuredly many of those persons who can stir and can feel the infatuation to its full height are not to the public gaze Venuses and Adonises. In fact, if beauty was indispensable, some of us would be safe. No; here, in the very heart of the laughter, you come upon a real mystery; which is continually presented afresh in each individual case. It is not, after all, very difficult to understand in a merely general way why the behaviour of lovers should set all beholders who are fancy-free agog with merriment.

In the first place, the leisurely, lackadaisical demeanour which the puzzlingly-assorted pairs all agree in putting on for the luckily brief period, is seen by everybody else who at the moment does not share the gay madness, to be in no way suited to the work-a-day condition of this world. Lovers, just to gaze uninterruptedly into each other's eyes, would without a thought leave the fields untilled and pooh-pooh with impatience any sober hint of a harvest being needful; factories might stand still and shops be for ever shut while they followed no other business than the light toil of plucking flowers for each other in the day, and wandering in linked couples at night under moonlit skies. There may be somewhere a holiday planet in which it is possible so to spend life unbrokenly, but it is not this one. If nature had not craftily mixed all ages in each generation, but left us just once all young together, half a year of universal love-making would ruin the globe. It is consequently clear that the proceeding has in it the unavoidable absurdity of not being able to last; and although each two persons who are smitten are vaguely aware of this holding good of others, still they believe that it is certainly to go on in their own case for ever. All the rest know that it cannot, and they must perforce laugh as they forecast the infatuated pair's awaking in surprise. In very close connection with this cause for mirth, there arises another. The couple of lovers who at first can, of necessity, know nothing of one another but the colour of their complexion, their stature, the sound of voice, or a few tricks of bodily bearing, promptly value each other, on no other grounds than these trivial ones, at a personal appraisement which everybody else can clearly see is ridiculously excessive. Every experienced person, no matter to which sex he or she belongs, knows, from only too bitter proofs, that no human being can, by mere reason of his or her height, hue of skin, and style of walking, be possibly worth to another half of what each of the deluded couple thinks for the time being that the other would be cheap at. The initiated are consequently forced

to chuckle beforehand at this further prospect of a wide-eyed amazement which lies before the lovers.

This will, perhaps, serve as a preliminary statement of the general facts; but we want to try to get below them. The first question which starts itself is, How is it that every couple, on being drawn together in this special way of bodily attraction, fall into the huge mistake of such a mutual over-estimate of each other's worth? It is into the puzzle of this enforced silliness of judging by personal aspect merely that we want to inquire a little in this paper.

The philosophers, as befits them—since to account for everything is their proper business—have a suggestion to offer. Physiological reasons, they hint, are at the bottom of these bodily affinities, these spontaneous preferences. One human frame, for its own fit complementing, naturally develops a special aesthetic in respect of another of the opposite sex: the admiration for a distinct kind of complexion, and for one of the classifiable types of face and figure, being decided and prompted by occult sensory stirrings. If you argue the question in the high philosophic manner, it does seem likely that, for practical objects connected with the preservation and full diversifying of these physical characteristics in the race, there would be some physiologically-acting bodily propclivities of the sort. The diverting astonishment begins so soon as you try to apply in particular cases the two or three wide generalisations which seem to be pointed to. For instance, there is a faint presumptive expectation that very tall persons will marry very short ones; and, again, light-complexioned persons are supposed to be attracted by dark skins, the latter in turn preferring blondes. But, then, so many are the exceptions to these rules that it is found to be quite impossible to predict according to them the striking of the infatuation in any separate case. Moreover, these great antithetical classifications of stature and complexion are not generally applicable. They could at most only refer to extremes. The bulk of us are necessarily of medium height, and of mixed, if not middle, tints; condemned from the start not to be striking in any vivid, superior, excelling way. For any explanation of the acting of physiological affinities between members of the common crowd you have, therefore, to take the inquiry still more in detail.

It is very curious, when doing so, to note how small a portion of the personal appearance can suffice to decide the bodily infatuation between the sexes. There seems to be no doubt that in some instances a pair of eyes have been fragment enough of it to attract fatally; or, for anything that can be conclusively made out, a mere roll or languishing turn of them has served. That is, all defect in the rest of the face and form can be overlooked in the dazzle of two tiny orbs flashingly set between cheeks and forehead. Any colour is able to exert a like fascination over the person in whom it effectively stirs admiration. That, of course, is part of the physiological case, as the philosophers frame it. In each particular instance, the hue must be specific; but it may be either blue, brown, grey,

black, or any other colour that is displayable by human irises. So, again, there is a secret preference as to hair. A special chromatic glory in female locks, or even a mere plentifullness of this shining excrescence of the bodily frame, has a bewildering effect upon some male creatures. The halo may differ in glint just as much as the eyes may in glance : gold is no more effective in one case than ebon darkness is in another. Nor can it be told beforehand whether the sweet folly will revel most in silky fluffiness, in the regulated elegance of symmetrical curls, or in the severity of plain, quietly resting bands. It would be easy to follow the points into much further minutiae. Some wooers, it has been suspected, have been wholly fascinated by a musical tone heard in the voice ; so small a trifle of sense-impression as a special tickling of the auditory nerves has decisively weighed in the affair of choosing an associate for life. In these cases, the man or woman may nearly be said to have married a voice. Indeed, any single bodily feature or detail can content, or at least can effectively attract, a lover's admiration. The mere shape and set of the head, or the slope and droop of the shoulders ; the general carriage of the body, particular curves in some parts of it ; a certain trip, glide, or sweep in walking ;—every one of these has been found to give enough of charm for eager liking to feed upon. Again and again, delight in the excellence of a single bodily feature is seen to overpower stark deformity in other portions of the frame. It may be set down for pretty certain that the explanation of some very puzzling selections on the part of lovers can be no other than this full content with a separate bodily detail, which seems to them so perfectly beautiful as to be quite irresistible. If the special charm is not the one which stirs infatuation in yourself, you may be left in utter perplexity as to the reason of the man's or the woman's choice. It would be seen that there is scarcely any limit to the apparent childishness of the grounds of these physical preferences if some people were courageously frank enough to avow them.

In saying all this, however, care must be taken not to make these few hints towards an explanation of the mystery of falling in love seem too solid and adequate. There is abundant evidence that the physiological affinities may act feebly and confusedly : in countless cases it is certain that the germ of bodily predilection is only very faintly developed. The aesthetics are uncertain, the taste indecisive. Any colour, any stature, any form may to all appearances indifferently and equally attract in a weak way. This would seem sufficiently perplexing ; but, further, it does not seem quite possible always to settle whether the asking for bodily charm is nearly absent or is, in fact, too sensitive. There are instances in which a moderate general approach to perfection is accepted instead of the partial excellences above spoken of, and appears to be itself indispensable. What seems to be most sought, then, is the absence of a jar upon any of the senses ; it is only resignedly demanded that there shall be no striking personal defects. The man or woman showing this

restrained moderation will necessarily seem to one who has violent tastes for some special personal characteristic to be content, in his or her appreciation, with what is tame, colourless, uninteresting in physical appearance. But there yet remains to be added that there are countless giddy, wholly unclassifiable cases in which most contradictory personal likings can be successively witnessed in the same individual. It is not every first attachment that is conclusive; and some persons have been known to marry more than once, and have made very different choices. Many, as already hinted, never quite exactly know what personal style they prefer. It is now a light complexion that attracts them; again it is a dark one: to-day they are seen with upturned faces admiringly contemplating height of stature; to-morrow looking down with a satisfied smirk on bodily shortness. Worst of all, not in a way of weakness but rather of too prompt recklessness, the mere antithesis of sex appears coarsely to suffice for certain low or poorly cultivated natures, causing a flare and disturbance of nervous excitement which precludes anything like a critical judgment of special characteristics. A floridness of skin or an expanse of white complexion, a breadth or bulkiness of some chief parts of the frame, will with them answer all the needs of the rudimentary physiologic aesthetic. But the phrase "falling in love" does not really belong to worthless examples so far down in the scale of bodily appreciation as this; the right use of the words always presupposes a decided personal preference. One human being is felt to be more attractive for merely bodily reasons than all the rest of the world besides.

Another remark may now be added. In the cases where the preference is decided by stress of some single bodily excellence there is evidently great risk. A fine pair of eyes may last sufficiently; but a glory got from an aureole of hair can fade quicker than the leaf, and a dazzling complexion is not to be relied upon. On the whole, a general approach to absence of bodily defect, rising of necessity into a moderate acceptableness in the entirety, if that has been enough to decide selection at the first, seems to tell best in the end. It would be possible to argue, moreover, that it does most credit to him or her who is content with it, for it is not every one who has the power of appreciating in any full and adequate way personal appearance in its entirety. To do so, a rather elaborate adjustment of observing is needed. Some people only find out, for example, by the merest accident, through forced momentary comparisons and contrasts, bodily defects in those nearest to them. The risks of this possibility of being eclipsed by disadvantageous comparison are heightened, too, when admiration rests on an apprehended excellence in a special respect. To-morrow, some one may be met with who has bluer or darker eyes, whose hair sparkles more lustrously or is more abundant, or who is better at a particular languish or attitude. Then the idol may topple instantly from its shrine. It is true that one who is worshipped less intensely, but in a wider way and for more diversified reasons, may also be surpassed; but the chances are that it will not

be by superiority at every point—at least, if that should happen, it can only occur by the happening of some miracle of perfect beauty, which everybody will so admire that any individual may reconcile himself to missing its obtaining since he is one among a crowd of disappointed sighers. It will be possible, moreover, to get a little consolation by spitefully thinking that the favoured mortal has been helped by luck.

But there is yet another puzzle in this inquiry which may as well be mentioned here. Afterwards, when love-making has led to its wished-for result, and the pair of wooers have formed a lasting union, then, as all the world well knows, a most strangely-growing blindness happens as to the personal excellences which at first started the bodily infatuation. Such lackadaisical motives are in the end nearly quite superseded by a set of practical considerations arising out of the domestic relationship, which so fill the minds of the man and woman that admiration on the score of physical aspect is remitted to other people. But anything further that has to be said on this part of the subject will be better offered later. Here we are still speaking of first falling in love.

In very many instances, where there is not what may be called a fully developed taste for personal charm, a counterfeit infatuation shows, which plays the part of the genuine attraction. There can be no doubt that a large number of young women mistakenly fancy that they have physically fascinated their wooers, and that a like multitude of young men wrongly think that they have personally interested the maidens who smile upon them, when what has befallen the couples is scarcely at all owing to anything inherent in themselves on either side. It has been really decided by a reflected glitter of social position, an effectiveness got from grouping with some other persons habitually near to them, or even the charm of a particular adjustment to a dwelling or a scene. Nearly any other young woman or young man in the same relation to the surroundings would have had the same effect on the admirer. In fact, members of both sexes have fallen in love with a mere domestic situation, a social interarrangement, when they, in a dull comfortable way, thought they were wooing and winning a person. There is plenty of detail ready to hand on this part of the subject. At times, sisters or even female friends, seen often together, can very heighteningly set off one another in male eyes. Owing to this illusiveness operating, a man may suffer a rather fine amazement, by-and-by, when he has secured his prize; and the links of these prior companionships being broken, or else much slackened, he at last sees the idol apart. Beheld moving around him ungrouped, she scarcely looks the same person. A fine, handsome mother of girls, if her own fading has not advanced so far as to hint a future withering of her daughters, may throw a soft embellishment around them, causing a youth of the leisurely-admiring sort fondly to picture in the future for one of the girls a ripe maturity of matronly appearance, which may, alas! be physiologically impossible. A genial, frank-spoken, manly father can throw a like glamour about his sons when unguarded maidens

see them in his atmosphere. There are, indeed, homes so well managed, families which offer such an impressive appearance of prosperity, as to cast a warmth and light of good fortune around every member of them, in a way of collective desert and ensured promise for all prospective groupings. Woe to the unallotted of either sex who crosses that particular threshold, and so passes under the spell, for the years may bring a rude disappointment. The admirer's own hearth may have scarcely any resemblance to that one.

It scarcely needs adding that in what has just been said we were not speaking of coolly-calculating self-seeking, where money or family connection is deliberately aimed at in preference to personal liking. The cases meant were those in which the influences which decide the choice operate in a way of natural attraction, doing so, in part at least, outside the formal judgment of those they determine. Only owing to that can the phrase "falling in love" be used of any instances even in the above explained counterfeit sense. But it may be asked, if the first real or fancied apprehensions of physical excellence which start what may be termed the genuine infatuation come by-and-by to obscure and weaken, why may not a choice prompted by these more circumstantial attractions turn out best, as being the most likely to lend itself well to the practical affairs which in the long run mainly tell upon the domestic relationship? That is exactly what the cynics do affirm. But neither the poets nor the moralists will listen to them. In order to state the poet's reasoning about love it will be obligatory to grow quite serious for a moment.

It may be at once admitted that it was taking too narrow a view of the aesthetics of love-making to speak only of a mutual personal admiration showing itself in the infatuated pair. They are not quite so fully absorbed as this; they can and do spare side-glances for the world in which they find themselves. It is a world which differs from the noisy, hum-drum one of daily business, and is yet it. Not even lovers can wholly get out of this common world; but they in part transform it, adding some other regions to it. The ecstasy aroused by the one loved central figure of this scene extends much further, and in fact stirs a more or less wide Art-feeling which includes the discovery and appreciation of beauty anywhere and everywhere. It is not difficult to understand how this artistic heightening of the sensibility comes about, for the very physiological key of the pair's daily and hourly living is raised in pitch. This is where the poet cannot be gainsaid. The prudent organising of a domestic connection may give economical and comfortable house-keeping; but it cannot give this poeticalising of the sensations, which, no matter how brief a time it lasts, if it is once rightly stirred by a fit of bodily entrancement in spontaneous worship of one of the other sex, leaves lingering about the world for ever some fitful recollections of a bowery Eden in it, not too crowded and all fair. Is it necessary to give the details? Lovers find out the sweetness of silence and secrecy; they become aware of the moon and the sky, and of the sea and woods and

fields in a wholly fresh and more delighting way. Flowers and music are no longer half-unintelligible ; all the emblems, metaphors, and parables of Nature are fully understood. Not one of the simple out-door glories is then in the least superfluous : every one of them is really needed to give some fitting background or due covert for a whisper or a smile. Even in more public and conventional scenes, the embellished, the ornamented grows natural ; and somewhere in the concerns of the pair a touch of romance is sure to be unfailingly brought in. The most rustic of wooers is not contented until he has sought for, presented, and had accepted from his hand something which he and the one other think fair and in some way uncommon. A flower of a kind as old as those Adam plucked will serve if need be. But where there is much wealth, rarity must be obtained by great costliness ; not necessarily out of a spirit of vulgar display, as is sometimes thought, but to give a seeming of sacrifice if it is not really practicable. If the infatuation of bodily admiration between a pair of lovers signifies a more subtle appreciation of the world, and a pricking of the spirit of adventure in male bosoms and of a feeling of willing tenderness in female hearts, the poets are not quite silly in their eulogies. Under this view, the most prudent marriage of convenience will not fully substitute the ancient silliness of impetuous youthful love-making. So far as to the mere poetry of the matter, and nothing whatever of the ethical argument has yet been used.

But already, in accepting anything in connection with this topic in a direct and simple way, as though it was quite intelligible and fully satisfactory, we afresh run the risk of seeming too easily to do away part of the mystery. Let no one, for instance, entertain the suggestion, which will scarcely fail to arise, that these physiological attractions give any clue for finding the compatibilities of temper, and the general moral and mental qualities which are needed for happy domestic life in any pair. On the exact contrary, here begins a new and most intricate complication of the proceeding. Not a few men and women come to have a bitter secret persuasion after marriage that they have been inveigled into the least suitable of unions by the very misleading of some one of these hallucinations of physical form, or lustre, or grace. Just as certainly as that the aesthetic inspired by love extends beyond the first strict needs of a personal worship of the idol, giving stray hints of Art, does an ethical inference accompany the beholding, or supposed beholding, of each trait of bodily loveliness, starting suggestions of high morals, of boundless sacrifice, of infinite worth. Owing to an awful sanctitude which there is in beauty, it takes much to convince a youthful adorer that she whom he thinks fair is not also good. There is no such scepticism as that which infatuated youth can show in this matter. But though the aesthetic always more or less vindicates itself, widening and heightening the power of appreciating what is beautiful in the outer world, the insight into moral qualities may be quite confused and blinded by these too eagerly prized details of bodily aspect. No more perfect amazements have

been suffered by mortal hearts in this world than those caused by first seeing eyes of supposed meekest innocence show an easy trick of flashing into scorn ; the velvet fulness of cherry-ripe lips, thought until then to be only capable of framing soft words of patience and assent, roseately to curl with spite ; or white slender necks, which before carried the small shining heads above them lightly poised for quick complacencies of sweet attention, suddenly stiffen with vanity, and swell their faint violet veins to purple, as hitherto smooth satiny foreheads wrinkled with quick rage. No doubt that female worshippers of manly breadth of shoulders, erectness of tall male stature, and supposed frankness of open masculine visage, are equally liable to those stark surprises. But, upon the whole, it seems likely that womanly elegance, softness, and fragility lend themselves most effectively to giving complete surprise in the beholding of these transformations. No man or woman can perfectly know how utterly he or she can feel to have been a fool in judgment until some one of the other sex has in one of these ways lifted the total disguise of a beautiful personal presence. It gives the blankest humiliation of intellect that a human being can undergo. All experienced people know that such things are. There is always sounding in the world a popular rumour that falling in love covers this fearful risk ; but the young folks—those to whom the whisper of such wisdom would be of any use—never listen to it ; or if a few exceptions do so, and shrewdly strive to be guided by a second deeper set of personal signs, which are summed up in the word “expression,” they, if in this way made a little safer, may yet fall into the hugest mistakes if they attempt too much of such sagacity. The more occasional bewitchments of momentary smiles, of secretly-forming dimples which only one at a time can see, of sudden kindlings of the eye, sympathetic softenings of the tone, passing elegances of attitude that seem to show the movements of the soul within, may all mislead. Nature, pry as you will, yet keeps something for fortune.

On the other hand, let us make haste to add, as strictly belonging to the natural complications of the topic, that there are lucky instances where men and women, who have exercised this restraint in not choosing wholly from the surface, have met with wonderful rewards of secret sweetness. On entering the houses of some husbands who have plain-looking wives, it is possible to detect a half-suppressed glee twinkling in their faces, as if there was a joke somewhere beneath the roof awaiting your discovery. By-and-by, you find it out. These slyly happy men know beforehand that you will shortly learn how, behind the uninteresting womanly exterior, each of them has really secured a homely angel to be ever at his side or moving about upon his hearth. In the hope of lighting on some such luck, examples are to be met with of individuals even deliberately foregoing physical attractions ; but usually it is after they have unlawfully worn out the enjoyments of them, and, by a right retribution, they are nearly sure miserably to miscarry in their choice, losing even the dull comfort they have groped after, simply by dispensing,

in their too late selection, with the possible natural guidance of anything like genuine falling in love. There would be much unfairness in confounding these bad cases with a few other instances whose existence seems to be verified, and which doubtless give the reason why wise Nature finds the heart to provide a sprinkling of women whom all do not think fair—the instances, namely, of men who like to admire in secret, and would feel their idol vulgarised if it drew too much of the public gaze. These chuckle as the privately-worshipped one passes through the world a pace behind them, retiring in their shadow only half observed; and they can be seen to start in apprehension at any chance attention casually bestowed upon their treasure. But, passing by such eccentric cases as these, any who try deliberately to be wiser than their fellows in this affair of love, run the risk of being proved silliest of all if they fail. A man who too coldly resists the natural charm of female loveliness, and tries by hunting after hidden clues to disposition to be made wholly safe in his choice, ought someway to be very sure that he succeeds; for, if he does not, he has not even such mitigations as bodily beauty in his costly prize would give to excuse, in part, his proved want of judgment. There is, in fact, no fully guarding against this hazardous non-coincidence between outward personal aspect and inner quality; for, although what is termed "expression" gives some puzzling hints as to the latter, the hints only reach to the extent of making it folly to have regard to beauty only, not being themselves capable of giving grounds for any formal estimate. It follows that in all the fortunate cases where a man or a woman finds out on their own hearth that the one they have chosen is, whenever the bodily mask is lifted, nobler within than the exterior promised, a fairy tale of private surprise and sweet delight goes forward under that roof from day to day.

Is it practicable now to attempt any graver statement than that which offered at the outset of the seeming preposterousness of the physiologically-produced hallucination of first falling in love? Well; it would seem that, after all, it is too superficial, too trivial a version of the affair to say that a youth and a maiden risk all on the attractiveness of a certain dazzle of complexion, a particular curl or flow of hair, a special attitude or movement, a precise height of stature, an exact breadth of shoulder; or, putting the matter generally—that is, in its entirety and at its best—some one express style of bodily aspect. In the worst instance of juvenile love's infatuation, the eager, idolatrous wooer believes that he gets a glimpse behind the physical mask of the very person that he wants for his companion. The rosy or pale cheek, smooth forehead, and glittering, soft-fringed eye, are the fleshy windows through which the young people think they can see one another. Moreover, the world of first love, although it wears so gay and amusing an aspect to all outsiders, is not a light or trivial world to the pairs who are within it. It is true that, when spoken to by any third person, they must laugh; but between themselves every word, gesture, look, is most significant. And

what is cynically set down as the finding out of the lovers' overprizing of one another is a very late unnecessary discovery, only ever made through the default of one or both of them. If they had only kept quite true, there would have been no silder reality under the sky. The high estimate that youths and maidens put on one another has but to be regarded as a pre-anticipation of merit which has to come, and in all the scheme of things there is no wiser contrivance for making effort nobly obligatory. Are the young people to wait before they admire each other till they have really justified it? In that case they would be no longer young when the mutual respect and liking came, but worn and grey in practising long, uphill, hard-proved virtue. First love's silliness saves that hardship, letting us begin life with a triumph—the fighting to come afterwards.

It would consequently seem that the matter may be finally re-stated thus—Nature has provided that adult life shall begin with a physically-guaranteed heightening of emotion, in which the beauty of the world is sympathetically apprehended, and the value of another human person is anticipatorily estimated as highly as the best possible desert could carry it. The accidents of personal fascination are but the means by which this great double end is gained, and by them man and woman are prompted to a spontaneous rehearsal of the forms of self-sacrifice and of full mutual appreciation. In this way it is secured that no one who has fallen in love genuinely for what is enthusiastically accepted as beauty's sake, even if it be by spontaneous admiration of but a shining curl, can be wholly ignorant of the discipline and etiquette of virtue. Nor can they ever afterwards quite lose the recollection of this early training, however brief the duration of it was. This is why it is that it is assuredly better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. Further, the uncertainties of the event, cruelly disastrous as they prove in individual cases, seem needed, up to a considerable frequency, to make it needful in this affair, as in every other happening of human life, that man shall not mechanically yield himself to inclination without a struggle. In the very delirium of love he is bound under a heavy penalty to try a little to be wise.

Besides the first tumultuous passion caused by mere bodily fascination, there happily are possible some glorious later fallings in love over again with the same person for more lasting reasons, after the physical charm of superficial aspect has more or less expended itself. There is scarcely any limit to the extent to which domestic association can be freshened by the progressive discovery of compatibilities of character, or the repeated elicitings of ever-new admiration on the score of mental and moral excellence in those nearest to you. The occasions for these later, better wooings are unpredictable; at times they are long deferred, and often they ask the suffering of joint trials to give the opportunity. But, whenever any reappreciation of heightened mutual value of this kind takes place, the friends and acquaintances of the parties see, with

surprise, that there is a pair of married lovers on the hearth. At these rejuvenating times the faded personal charms may even be again noticed shining forth afresh ; if with less lustre, yet with more clearness and serenity than at the first. If the physical charm is gone, or if it was never greatly there, the absence of it will be replaced by the sweetness of a wise conviction that it was not indispensable ; and if the obscuring of the bodily frame has been caused by trouble bravely borne, a pathetic reverence may even exult over the marks, idolising them as dearer than the trivial unearned perfections of beauty. A pair who have passed through much grief together, if only they have gone through it well, making some sacrifices for one another, must in the end come to love one another in this quiet but lasting style. The ideal picture of human love now faintly offers itself before us. In a perfect example, a youthful pair would have their glances first mutually drawn together and brightly entangled by the physiological affinities prompting bodily admiration for mere beauty's sake ; and, before the rosy shame naturally attendant on that embarrassing confession had quite faded, a new reciprocal discovery of inner, more personal merit should succeed ; while time, in its long bringing of the mixed events of fortune, should ever and again add new pathetic consecrations of affection from inevitable woes easily shared together. It is easy to see that in such an instance the mutual attractions, as they succeed and accumulate, become knitted closer and closer ; they are not so much renewals of a fitfully-weakening feeling as fuller developments of it, with strange softenings and heightenings of tender and gay and solemn reminiscences adding themselves perfectly at every stage.

But who can rationally hope for such a complete realisation of the ideal of love as this ? People in general have to be content with one or other of these events. To some this of the series falls, and to others that ; the humbler thankfulness which comes to be felt by most at the arrangement seeming to arise from finding that, where the first chance has been missed, the later ones may possibly be enjoyed in some hap or other of their succession.

This throws a little light upon the subtle casuistries of this matter of love. It is a standing question, for instance, which each new generation of maidens persists in keeping alive, whether any subsequent falling in love can equal the first ? Those among the older people to whom fortune has been unkind in that early chance try hard to get some possibility of the sort allowed ; while the younger folk shake doubtful heads, and, growing maudlin in advance, throw out hints of a poetical despair if all does not go well from the very first. A partial explanation is got, when you remember that the juveniles know nothing of the later fallings in love ; and that it is of those the worn veterans are thinking, having forgotten something of the sweet though heated and risky delirium of the first inexplicable fascination. Obviously, it is possible for a man or a woman to miss of some of these successive possibilities of love in one preliminary selection or one union, and to find them, or some of them, in a later venture. Which

happiness is it that the eulogist is at the time enjoying? One kind, moreover, may happen in perfection after another has only, by cross accident, been half fulfilled, and the very prosperity of the later event may throw into the shade the more exciting interest which the earlier experience in part had, but which it lost. A man, again, may so narrowly escape from the shipwreck of all his peace in the tempestuous admiration of bodily beauty, that he may ever after partly go in dread of it, and may hug himself in a feeling of comfort and of safety in a quieter appreciating of suitability of character. That first manner of falling in love will seem to him too full of peril to have any justification. But let him go, and, on this ground, advise the young people to omit it! The world will echo with the derisive laughter of their answer. He will be told mockingly that he has tried it, or he could not have known of this possibility of failure; and it will be triumphantly flung in his face, that his non-success must have been well deserved. Are they, the juveniles, not at that moment determined on succeeding? No; this prudence of understanding first love's silliness is a wisdom which youth will never learn.

For the last words, we had better try to get back to the gay recklessness which alone quite befits the subject when publicly talked of, and which it at the outset naturally prompted. That rustic witchery of eyes and lips and cheeks, the sheepish yielding to which makes its victims so merrily ludicrous to all spectators, is not to be foregone without the incurring of special loss which nothing else can quite make up. It is very well to have the later kinds of falling in love, but it is an ill misfortune not to have begun with this one; the heightening of the world's loveliness and the complete sense of personal value which it gives can only be fully hoped for in a certain comparative period of earliness of life. This is the bit of hard logic that the juveniles have on their side. But there scarcely is any need for pushing this reasoning further. The young people go on tumbling in love in that early primitive fashion, with no falling off in the most ancient easiness of the practice; attributing to one another, as a kind of desert, the unmerited possession of youth and such chance of bodily beauty as there is. When they cease to do this, there will not much longer be any young people to find fault with for not mutually fascinating one another. Any preaching needed in the case is, in fact, that of restraint rather than urging forward; and the shrewd warnings of experience, if they are to have any use, must be made half jocose to get them listened to at all by the right persons.

Venetian Folk-Songs.

To the idealised vision that goes along with hereditary culture a large town may seem an impressive spectacle. For Wordsworth, worshipper of nature though he was, earth had not anything to show more fair than London from Westminster Bridge, and Victor Hugo finds endless inspiration on the top of a Parisian omnibus. As shrines of art, as foci of historic memories, even simply as vast aggregates of human beings working out the tragic-comedy of life, great cities have furnished the keynote to much fine poetry. But it is different with the letterless masses. The student of literature, who turns to folk-songs in search after a new enjoyment, will meet with little to attract him in urban rhymes; if there are many that present points of antiquarian interest, there are few that have any kind of poetic worth. The people's poetry grows not out of an ideal world of association and aspiration, but from the springs of their life. They cannot see with their minds as well as with their eyes. What they do see in most great towns is the monotonous ugliness which surrounds their homes and their labour. Then again, it is a well-known fact that with the people loss of individuality means loss of the power of song; and where there is density of population there is generally a uniformity as featureless as that of pebbles on the sea beach. Still to the rule that folk-poetry is not a thing of town growth one exception has to be made. Venice, unique under every aspect, has songs which, if not of the highest, are unquestionably of a high order. The generalising influences at play in great political centres have hardly affected the inhabitants of the city which for a thousand years of independence was a body politic complete in itself. Nor has Venetian common life lacked those elements of beauty without whose presence the popular muse is dumb. The very industries of the Venetians were arts, and when they were young and spiritually teachable, their chief bread-winning work of every day was Venice—her ducal chapel, her campanile, her palaces of marble and porphyry. In the process of making her the delight of after ages, they attended an excellent school of poetry.

The gondolier contemporary with Byron was correctly described as songless. At a date closely coinciding with the overthrow of Venetian freedom, the boatmen left off wakening the echoes of the Grand Canal, except by those cries of warning which, no one can quite say why, so thrill and move the hearer. It was no rare thing to find among the Italians of the Lombardo-Venetian provinces the old pathetic instinct of keeping silence before the stranger. We recollect a story told us by one

of them. When he was a boy, Antonio—that was his name—had to make a journey with two young Austrian officers. They took notice of the lad, who was sprightly and good-looking, and by-and-by they asked him to sing. “Canta, canta, il piccolo,” said they; “sing us the songs of Italy.” He refused. They insisted, and, coming to a tavern, they gave him wine, which sent the blood to his head. So at last he said, “Very well, I will sing you the songs of Italy.” What he sang was one of the most furiously anti-Austrian songs of '48. “Taci, taci, il piccolo!” (“Be quiet!”) cried the officers, who yet knew how to appreciate the boy's spirit, for they pressed on him a ten-franc piece at parting. To return to Venice. In the year 1819 an English traveller asked for a song of a man who was reported to have once chanted Tasso *alla barcaruola*; the old gondolier shook his head. “In times like these,” he said, “he had no heart to sing.” Foreign visitors had to fall back on the beautiful German music, at the sound of which Venetians ran out of the Piazza, lest they might be seduced by its hated sweetness. Meanwhile the people went on singing in their own quarters, and away from the chance of ministering to their masters' amusement. It is even probable that the moral casemate to which they fled favoured the preservation of their old ways, that of poetising included. Instead of aiming at something novel and modern, the Venetian wished to be like what his fathers were when the flags on St. Mark's staffs were not yellow and black. So, like his fathers, he made songs and sang songs, of which a good collection has been formed, partly in past years, and partly since the black-and-yellow standard has given place, not, indeed, to the conquered emblems of the Greek isles, but to the colours of Italy, reconquered for herself.

Venetian folk-poesy begins at the cradle. The baby Venetian, like most other babies, is assured that he is the most perfect of created beings. Here and there, underlying the baby nonsense, is a dash of pathos. “Would you weep if I were dead?” a mother asks, and the child is made to answer, “How could I help weeping for my own mamma, who loves me so in her heart?” A child is told that if he asks his mother, who is standing by the door, “What are you doing there?” she will reply, “I am waiting for thy father; I wait and wait, and do not see him coming; I think I shall die thus waiting.” The little Venetian has the failings of baby-kind all the world over; he cries and he laughs when he ought to be fast asleep. His mother tells him that he was born to live in Paradise; she is sure that the angels would rejoice in her darling's beauty. “Sleep well, for thy mother sits near thee,” she sings, “and if by chance I go away, God will watch thee when I am gone.”

A christening is regarded in Venice as an event of much social as well as religious importance. By canon law the bonds of relationship established by godfatherhood count for the same as those of blood, for which reason the Venetian nobles used to choose a person of inferior

rank to stand sponsor for their children, thus escaping the creation of ties prohibitive of marriage between persons of their own class. In this case the material responsibilities of the sponsor were slight—it was his part to take presents, and not to make them. By way of acknowledging the new connection, the child's father sent the godfather a marchpane, that cake of mystic origin which is still honoured and eaten from Nuremberg to Malaga. With the poor, another order of things is in force. The *compare de l'anelo*—the person who acted as groomsman at the marriage—is chosen as sponsor to the first-born child. His duties begin even before the christening. When he hears of the child's birth, he gets a piece of meat, a fowl, and two new-laid eggs, packs them in a basket, and despatches them to the young mother. Eight days after the birth comes the baptism. On returning from the church, the sponsor, now called *compare de San Zuane*, visits the mother, before whom he displays his presents—twelve or fifteen lire for herself; for the baby a pair of earrings, if it be a girl; and if a boy, a pair of boy's earrings, or a single ornament to be worn in the right ear. Henceforth the godfather is the child's natural guardian next to its parents; and should they die, he is expected to provide for it. Should the child die, he must buy the *zogia* (the "joy"), a wreath of flowers now set on the coffins of dead infants, but formerly placed on their heads when they were carried to the grave-isle in full sight of the people. This last custom led to even more care being given to the toilet of dead children than what might seem required by decency and affection. To dress a dead child badly was considered shameful. Tradition tells of what happened to a woman who was so miserly that she made her little girl a winding-sheet of rags and tatters. When the night of the dead came round and all the ghosts went in procession, the injured babe, instead of going with the rest, tapped at its mother's door and cried, "Mamma, do you see me? I cannot go in procession because I am all ragged." Every year on the night of the dead the baby girl returned to make the same reproach.

Venetian children say before they go to bed:—

Bona sera ai vivi,
E riposo ai poveri morti;
Bon viagio ai naveganti
E bona note ai tuti quanti.

There is a sort of touching simplicity in this; and somehow the wish of peace to the "poor dead" recalls a line of Baudelaire's—

Les morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs.

But as a whole, the rhymes of the Venetian nursery are not interesting, save from their extreme resemblance to the nursery rhymes of England, France, or any other European country. They need not, therefore, detain us.

Twilight is of an Eastern brevity on the Adriatic shore, both in nature and in life. The child of yesterday is the man of to-day, and as soon as

the young Venetian discovers that he has a heart, he takes pains to lose it to a *Tosa* proportionately youthful. The Venetian (and Provençal) word *Tosa* signifies maiden, though whether the famous Cima Tosa is thus a sister to the Jungfrau is not sure, some authorities believing it to bear the more prosaic designation of baldheaded.* Our young Venetian may perhaps be unacquainted with the girl he has marked out for preference. In any case he walks up and down or rows up and down assiduously under her window. One night he will sing to a slow, languorous air—possibly an operatic air, but so altered as to be not easy of recognition—“I wish all good to all in this house, to father and to mother and as many as there be; and to Marieta who is my beloved, she whom you have in your house.” The name of the singer is most likely Nane, for Nane and Marieta are the commonest names in Venice, which is explained by the impression that persons so called cannot be bewitched, a serious advantage in a place where the Black Art is by no means extinct. The maiden long remembers the night when first her rest was disturbed by some such greeting as the above. She has rendered account of her feelings:—

Ah! how mine eyes are weighed in slumber deep!
Now all my life, it seems, has gone to sleep;
But if a lover passes by the door,
Then seems it this my life will sleep no more.

It does not do to appropriate a serenade with too much precipitation. Don Quixote gave it as his experience that no woman would believe that a poem was written expressly for her unless it made an acrostic on her name spelt out in full. Venetian damsels proceed with less caution: hence now and then a sad disappointment. A girl who starts up all pit-a-pat at the twanging of a guitar may be doomed to hear the cruel sentence pronounced in Lord Houghton's pretty lyric:—

“I am passing—Premé—but I stay not for you!
Premé—not for you!

Even more unkind are the literal words of the Venetian: “If I pass this way and sing as I pass, think not, fair one, that it is for you—it is for another love, whose beauty surpasses yours!”

A brother or a friend occasionally undertakes the serenading. He is not paid like the professional Trovador whom the Valencian lover engages to act as his interpreter. He has no reward in view but empty thanks, and it is scarcely surprising if on damp nights he is inclined to fall into a rather querulous vein. “My song is meant for the Morosa of my companion,” says one of these accommodating minstrels. “If only I knew where she was! But he told me that she was somewhere in here. The rain is wetting me to the skin!” Another exclaims more cheerfully, “Beautiful angel, if it pleases God, you will become my sister-in-law!”

* “Tonsurata.”

After the singing of the preliminary songs, Nane seeks a hint of the effect produced on the beloved Marieta. As she comes out of church, he makes her a most respectful bow, and if it be returned ever so slightly, he musters up courage, and asks in so many words whether she will have him. Marieta reflects for about three days; then she communicates her answer by sign or song. If she does not want him, she shuts herself up in the house and will not look out for a moment. Nane begs her to show her face at the window: "Come, oh! come! If thou comest not 'tis a sign that thou lovest me not; draw my heart out of all these pangs." Marieta, if she is quite decided, sings back from behind the half-closed shutters, "You pass this way, and you pass in vain: in vain you wear out shoes and soles; expect no fair words from me." It may be that she confesses to not knowing her own mind: "I should like to be married, but I know not to whom: when Nane passes, I long to say 'Yes'; when Toni passes, I am fain to look kindly at him; when Bepi passes, I wish to cry, God bless you!" Or again, it may be that her heart is not hers to give:—

Wouldst thou my love? For love I have no heart;
 I had it once, and gave it once away;
 To my first love I gave it on a day . . .
 Wouldst thou my love? For love I have no heart.

In the event of the girl intimating that she is disposed to listen to her *Moro* if all goes well, he turns to her parents and formally asks permission to pay his addresses to their daughter. That permission is, of course, not always granted. If the parents have thoughts of a wealthier match, the poor serenader finds himself unceremoniously sent about his business. A sad state of things ensues. Marieta steals many a sorrowful glance at the despised Nane, who, on his side, vents his indignation on the authors of her being in terms much wanting in respect. "When I behold thee so impassioned," he cries, "I curse those who have caused this grief; I curse thy papa and thy mamma, who will not let us make love." No idea is here implied of dispensing with the parental fiat; the same cannot be said of the following observations: "When I pass this house, my heart aches. The girl wills me well, her people will me ill; her people will not hear of it, nor, indeed, will mine. So we have to make love secretly. But that cannot really be done. He who wishes for a girl, goes and asks for her—out of politeness. He who wants to have her, carries her off." It would seem that the maiden has been known to be the first to incite rebellion:—

Do, my beloved, as other lovers do,
 Go to my father, and ask leave to woo;
 And if my father to reply is loth,
 Come back to me, for thou hast got my troth.

When the parents have no *prima facie* objection to the youth, they set about inquiring whether he bears a good character, and whether the girl has a real liking for him. These two points cleared up satisfactorily,

they still defer their final answer for some weeks or months, to make a trial of the suitor and to let the young people get better acquainted. The lover, borne up by hope, but not yet sure of his prize, calls to his aid the most effective songs in his repertory. The last thing at night Marieta hears :—

Sleep thou, most fair, in all security,
For I have made me guardian of thy gate,
Safe shalt thou be, for I will watch and wait;
Sleep thou, most fair, in all security.

The first thing in the morning she is greeted thus :—

Art thou awake, O fairest, dearest, best?
Raise thy blond head and bid thy slumbers fly;
This is the hour thy lover passes by;
Throw him a kiss, and then return to rest.

If she has any lurking doubts of Nane's constancy, she receives the assurance "One of these days I will surely make thee my bride—be not so pensive, fairest angel!" If, on the other hand, Nane lacks complete confidence in her affection, he appeals to her in words resembling we know not what Eastern love-song : "Oh, how many steps I have taken to have thee, and how many more I would take to gain thee! I have taken so many, many steps, that I think thou wilt not forsake me."

The time of probation over, the girl's parents give a feast, to which the youth and his parents are invited. He brings with him, as a first offering, a small ring ornamented with a turquoise or a carnelian. Being now the acknowledged lover, he may come and openly pay his court every Sunday. On Saturday Marieta says to herself "*Ancuo xe sabo, doman xe festa*—to-morrow is fête-day, and to-morrow I expect Nane!" Then she pictures how he will come "dressed for the *festa* with a little flower in his hand;" and her heart beats with impatience. If, after all, by some chance—who knows? by some faithlessness perhaps—he fails to appear, what grief, what tears! Marieta's first thought when she rises on Sunday morning is this: "No one works to-day, for it is *festa*; I pray you come betimes, dearest love!" Then comes the second thought: "If he does not come betimes, it is a sign that he is near to death; if later I do not see him, it is a sign that he is dead." The day passes, evening is here—no Nane! "Vespers sound, and my love comes not; either he is dead, or" (the third and bitterest thought of all) "a love-thief has stolen him from me!"

Some little while after the lover has been formally accepted, he presents the maiden with a plain gold ring called *el segno*, and a second dinner or supper takes place at her parent's house, answering to the German betrothal feast; henceforth he is the *sposo* and she the *novizza*, and, as in Germany, people look on the pair as very little less than wedded. The new bride gives the bridegroom a silk handkerchief, to which allusion is made in a verse running, "What is that handkerchief you are wearing? Did you steal it or borrow it? I neither stole it nor borrowed it; my *Morosa* tied it round my neck." At Easter the

sposo gives a cake and a couple of bottles of Cyprus or Malaga; at Christmas a box of almond sweetmeats and a little jug of *mostarda* (a Venetian *spécialité* composed of quinces dressed in honey and mustard); at the feast of St. Martin, sweet chestnuts; at the feast of St. Mark, *el bocolo*—that is, a rosebud, emblematical of the opening year. The lover may also employ his generosity on New Year's day, on the girl's name-day, and on other days not specified, taking in the whole 365. Some maidens show a decided taste for homage in kind. "My lover bids me sing, and to please him I will do it," observes one girl, thus far displaying only the most disinterested amiability. But presently she reveals her motives: "He has a ring with a white stone; when I have sung he will give it to me." A less sordid damsels asks only for a bunch of flowers; it shall be paid for with a kiss, she says. Certain things there are which may be neither given nor taken by lovers who would not recklessly tempt fate. Combs are placed under the ban, for they may be made to serve the purposes of witchcraft; saintly images and church-books, for they have to do with trouble and repentance; scissors, for scissors stand for evil speaking; and needles, for it is the nature of needles to prick.

Whether through the unwise exchange of these prohibited articles, or from other causes, it does sometimes happen that the betrothed lovers who have been hailed by everybody as *novizza* and *sposo* yet manage to fall out beyond any hopes of falling in again. If it is the youth's fault that the match is broken off, all his presents remain in the girl's undisputed possession; if the girl is to blame, she must send back the *segno* and all else that she has received. It is said that in some districts of Venetia the young man keeps an accurate account of whatever he spends on behalf of his betrothed, and in the case of her growing tired of him, she has to pay double the sum total, besides defraying the loss incurred by the hours he has sacrificed to her, and the boots he has worn out in the course of his visits.

It is more usual, as well as more satisfactory, for the betrothal to be followed in due time by marriage. After the *segno* has been "passed," the *sposo* sings a new song. "When," asks he, "will be the day whereon to thy mamma I shall say 'Madona'; to thy papa 'Missier'; and to thee, darling, 'Wife'?" "Madona" is still the ordinary term for mother-in-law at Venice; in Tuscan songs the word is also used in that sense, though it has fallen out of common parlance. Wherever it is to be found, it points to the days when the house-mother exercised an unchallenged authority over all members of the family. Even now the mother-in-law of Italian folk-songs is a formidable personage; to say the truth, there is no scant measure of self-congratulation when she happens not to exist. "Oh! Dio del ciel, mandeme un novenin senza madona!" is the heartfelt prayer of the Venetian girl.

If the youth thinks of the wedding day as the occasion of forming new ties—above all that dearest tie which will give him his *anzola bela*

for his own—the maiden dreams of it as the *zornada santa*; the day when she will kneel at the altar and receive the solemn benediction of the Church upon entering into a new station of life. “Ah! when shall come to pass that holy day, when the priest will say to me, ‘Are you content?’ when he shall bless me with the holy water—ah! when shall it come to pass?”

It has been noticed that the institution of marriage is not regarded in a very favourable light by the majority of folk-poets, but Venetian rhymers as a rule take an encouraging view of it. “He who has a wife,” sings a poet of Chioggia, “lives right merrily *co la sua cara sposa in compagnia*.” Warning voices are not, however, wanting to tell the maiden that wedded life is not all roses: “You would never want to be married, my dear, if you knew what it was like,” says one such; while another mutters, “Reflect, girls, reflect, before you wed these gallants; on the Ponte di Rialto bird-cages are sold.”

The marriage generally comes off on a Sunday. Who weds on Monday goes mad; Tuesday will bring a bad end; Wednesday is a day good for nothing; Thursday all manner of witches are abroad; Friday leads to early death; and, as to Saturday, you must not choose that, *parchè de sabo piove*, “because on Saturday it rains!”

The bride has two toilets—one for the church, one for the wedding dinner. At the church she wears a black veil, at the feast she appears crowned with flowers. After she is dressed and before the bridegroom arrives, the young girl goes to her father’s room and kneeling down before him, she prays with tears in her eyes to be forgiven whatever grief she may have caused him. He grants her his pardon and gives her his blessing. In the early dawn the wedding party go to church either on foot or in gondolas, for it is customary for the marriage knot to be tied at the conclusion of the first mass. When the right moment comes the priest puts the *vera*, or wedding ring, on the tip of the bride’s finger, and the bridegroom pushes it down into its proper place. If the *vera* hitches, it is a frightfully bad omen. When once it is safely adjusted, the best man steps forward and restores to the bride’s middle finger the little ring which formed the lover’s earliest gift; for this reason he is called *compare de l’anelo*, a style and title he will one day exchange for that of *compare de San Zuane*.

At the end of the service the bride returns to her father’s house, where she remains quietly till it is time to get ready for dinner. As the clock strikes four, the entire wedding party, with the parents of bride and bridegroom and a host of friends and relations, start in gondolas for the inn at which the repast is to take place. The whole population of the *colle* or *campo* is there to see their departure, and to admire or criticise, as the case may be. After dinner, when every one has tasted the good wine and enjoyed the good fare, the feast breaks up with cries of *Viva la novizza!* followed by songs, stories, laughter, and much flirtation between the girls and boys, who make the most of the freedom of

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intercourse conceded to them in honour of the day. Then the music begins, the table is whisked away, and the assembled guests join lustily in the dance ; the women, perhaps, singing at intervals, "Enôta, enôta, enô ! " a burden borne over to Venice from the Grecian shore. The romance is finished ; Marieta and Nane are married, the *zornada santa* wanes to its close, the tired dancers accompany the bride to the threshold of her new home—and so adieu !

At first sight the songs of the various Italian provinces appear to be greatly alike, but at first sight only. Under further examination they display essential differences, and even the songs which travel all over Italy almost always receive some distinctive touch of local colour in the districts where they obtain naturalisation. The Venetian poet has as strongly marked an identity as any of his fellows. Not to speak of his having invented the four-lined song known as the "Vilota," the quality of his work unmistakably reflects his peculiar idiosyncrasies. An Italian writer has said, "nella parola e nello scritto ognuno imita sè stesso ;" and the Venetian "imitates himself" faithfully enough in his verses. He is the one realist among Italian folk-singers. He has a well-developed sense of humour, and his finer wit discerns less objectionable paths than those of parody and burlesque, for which the Sicilian shows so fatal a leaning. He is often in a mood of half-playful cynicism ; if his paramount theme is love, he is yet fully inclined to have a laugh at the expense of the whole race of lovers :—

A feast I will prepare for love to eat,
Non-suited suitors I will ask to dine ;
They shall have pain and sorrow for their meat,
They shall have tears and sobs to drink for wine ;
And sighs shall be the servitors most fit
To wait at table where the lovers sit.

As compared with the Tuscan, the Venetian is a confirmed egotist. While the former well-nigh effaces his individual personality out of his hymns of adoration, the latter is apt to talk so much of his private feelings, his wishes, his disappointments, that the idol stands in danger of being forgotten. There is, indeed, a single song which combines the sweet humility of Tuscan lyrics with a glow and fervour truly Venetian—possibly its author was in reality some Istriot seaman, for the *canti popolari* of Istria are known to partake of both styles. Anyhow, it may figure here, justified by what seems to us its own excellence of conception :—

Fair art thou born, but love is not for me ;
A sailor's calling sends me forth to sea.
I do desire to paint thee on my sail,
And o'er the briny deep I'd carry thee.
They ask, What ensign ? when the boat they hail—
For woman's love I bear this effigy ;
For woman's love, for love of maiden fair :
If her I may not love, I love forswear !

When he is most in earnest and most excited, the Venetian is still homely—he has none of the Sicilian's luxuriant imagination. We may call to mind a remark of Edgar Poe's to the effect that passion demands a homeliness of expression. Passionate the Venetian poet certainly is. Never a man was readier to "dare e'en death" at the behest of his mistress—

Wouldst have me die? Then I'll no longer live.
 Grant unto me for sepulchre thy bed,
 Make me straightway a pillow of thy head,
 And with thy mouth one kiss, beloved one, give.

At Chioggia, where still in the summer evenings *Orlando Furioso* is read in the public places, and where artists go in quest of the old Venetian type, they sing a yet more impassioned little song.

Oh, Morning Star, I ask of thee this grace,
 This only grace I ask of thee, and pray:
 The water where thou hast washed thy breast and face,
 In kindly pity throw it not away.
 Give it to me for medicine; I will take
 A draught before I sleep and when I wake;
 And if this medicine shall not make me whole,
 To earth my body, and to hell my soul!

It must be added that Venetian folk-poetry lacks the innate sympathy for all beautiful natural things which pervades the poetry of the Apennines. This is in part the result of outward conditions: nature, though splendid, is unvaried at Venice. The temperament of the Venetian poet explains the rest. If he alludes to the *bel seren con tante stelle*, it is only to say that "it would be just the night to run away with somebody"—to which assertion he tacks the disreputable rider, "he who carries off girls is not called a thief, he is called an enamoured young man."

Even in the most lovely and the most poetic of cities you cannot breathe the pure air of the hills. The Venetian is without the intense refinement of the Tuscan mountaineer, as he is without his love of natural beauty. The Tuscan but rarely mentions the beloved one's name—he respects it as the Eastern mystic respects the name of the Deity; the Venetian sings it out for the edification of all the boatmen of the canal. The Tuscan has come to regard a kiss as a thing too sacred to talk about; the Venetian has as few scruples on the subject as the poet of Sirmio. Nevertheless, it should be recognised that a not very blameable unreservedness of speech is the most serious charge to be brought against all save a small minority of Venetian singers. We believe that the able and conscientious collector, Signor Bernoni, has exercised but slight censorship over the mass of songs he has placed on record, notwithstanding which the number of those that can be accused of an immoral tendency is extremely limited. From whence it is to be inferred that the looseness of manners prevailing amongst the higher classes at Venice in the decadence of the Republic at no time became general in the lower and sounder strata of society.

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Venetian songs will serve as a guide to the character, but scarcely to the opinions, of the Venetians. The long struggle with Austria has left no other trace than a handful of rough verses dating from the siege—mere strings of *Evivas* to the dictator and the army. It may be argued that the fact is not exceptional, that like the *Fratelli d'Italia* of Goffredo Mameli, the war-songs of the Italian movement were all composed for the people and not by them. Still there have been genuine folk-poets who have discoursed after their fashion of *Italia libera*. The Tuscan peasants sang as they stored the olives of 1859—

L'amore l'ho in Piamonte,
Bandiera tricolor!

There is not in Venetian songs an allusion to the national cause so naïvely, so caressingly expressive as this. It cannot be that the Venetian *popolano* did not care; whenever his love of country was put to the test, it was found in no way wanting. Was it that to his positive turn of mind there appeared to be an absence of connection between politics and poetry? Looking back to the songs of an earlier period, we find the same habit of ignoring public events. A rhyme, answering the purpose of our "Ride a cock horse," contains the sole reference to the wars of Venice with the Porte—

Andemo a la guera
Per mare e per terra,
E cataremo i Turchi,
Li mazzaremo tutti, &c.

In the proverbs, if not in the songs, a somewhat stronger impress remains of the independent attitude assumed by the Republic in its dealings with the Vatican. The Venetians denied Papal infallibility by anticipation in the saying, "The Pope and the countryman knows more than the Pope alone;" and in one line of a nursery doggerel, "El Papa no xè Rè," they quietly abolished the temporal power. When Paul V. laid the city under an interdict, the citizens made answer, "Prima Veneziani e poi cristiani," a proverb that survives to this day. "Venetians first" was the first article of faith of these men, or rather it was to them a vital instinct. Their patriotism was a kind of magnificent *amour propre*. No modern nation has felt a pride of state so absorbing, so convinced, so transcendent: a pride which lives incarnate in the forms and faces of the Venetian senators who look serenely down on us from the walls of the Art Gallery out of the company of kings, of saints, of angels, and of such as are higher than the angels.

A chance word or phrase now and then accidentally carries us back to Republican times and institutions. The expression, "Thy thought is not worth a *gazeta*," occurring in a love-song, reminds us that the term *gazette* is derived from a Venetian coin of that name, value three-quarters of a farthing, which was the fee charged for the privilege of hearing read aloud the earliest venture in journalism, a manuscript news-sheet issued once a month at Venice in the sixteenth century. The figure of

speech "We must have fifty-seven," meaning "We are entering on a serious business," has its origin in the fifty-seven votes necessary to the passing of any weighty measure in the Venetian Senate. The Venetian adapter of Molière's favourite ditty, in lieu of preferring his sweetheart to the "bonne ville de Paris," prefers her to "the Mint, the Arsenal, and the Bucentaur." Every one is familiar with the quaint description of the outward glories of St. Mark's Square—

In St. Mark's Place three standards you descriy,
And chargers four that seem about to fly ;
There is a time-piece which appears a tower,
And there are twelve black men who strike the hour.

Social prejudices creep in where politics are almost excluded. A group of *Vilote* relates to the feud—old as Venice—between the islanders of San Nicolo and the islanders of Castello, the two sections of the town east of the Grand Canal, in the first of which stands St. Mark's, in the last the Arsenal. The best account of the two factions is embodied in an ancient poem celebrating the fight that rendered memorable St. Simon's Day, 1521. The anonymous writer tells his tale with an impartiality that might be envied by greater historians, and he ends by putting a canto of peaceable advice into the mouth of a dying champion, who urges his countrymen to dwell in harmony and love one another as brothers. Are they not made of the same flesh and bone, children alike of St. Mark and his State ?

Tuti a la fin no semio patrioti,
Cresciu in sti campi, ste cale e cantoni ?

The counsel was not taken, and the old rivalry continued unabated, fostered up to a certain point by the Republic, which saw in it, amongst other things, a check on the power of the patricians. The two sides represented the aristocratic and democratic elements of the population : the Castellani had wealth and birth and fine palaces, their upper classes monopolised the high offices of State, their lower classes worked in the arsenal, served as pilots to the men-of-war, and acted as rowers in the Bucentaur. The better-to-do Nicoloti came off with a share of the secondary employes, whilst the larger portion of the San Nicolo folk were poor fishermen. But their sense of personal dignity was intense. They had a doge of their own, usually an old sailor, who on high days and holidays sat beside the "renowned prince, the Duke of Venice." This doge, or *Gastaldo dei Nicoloti*, was answerable for the conduct of his people, of whom he was at once superior and equal. "Ti voghi el dose et mi vogó col dose" ("You row the doge, I row with the doge"), a Nicoloto would say to his rival. It is easy to see how the party spirit engendered by the old feud produced a sentiment of independence in even the poorest members of the community, and how it thus became of great service to the Republic. Its principal drawback was that of leading to hard blows, the last occasion of its doing so being St. Simon's

Day, 1817, when a fierce local outbreak was severely suppressed by the Austrians. Since then the contending forces have agreed to dwell in harmony; whether they love one another as brothers is not so clear. There are songs still sung in which mutual recrimination takes the form of too strong language for ears polite. "If a Nicoloto is born, a Count is born; if a Castellan is born—set up the gallows," is the mildest dictum of a son of sun Nicolo, to which his neighbour replies, "When a Castellan is born, a god is born; when a Nicoloto is born, a brigand is born." The feud lingers on even in the matter of love. "Who is that youth who passes so often?" inquires a girl; "if it be a Castellan, bid him be off; if it be a Nicoloto, bid him come in."

To a friend recently Lost.

T. T.

WHEN I remember, Friend, whom lost I call
 Because a man beloved is taken hence,
 The tender humour and the fire of sense
 In your good eyes: how full of heart for all,
 And chiefly for the weaker by the wall,
 You bore that light of sane benevolence:
 Then see I round you Death his shadows dense
 Divide, and at your feet his emblems fall.
 For surely are you one with the white host,
 Spirits, whose memory is our vital air,
 Through the great love of earth they had: lo, these,
 Like beams that throw the path on tossing seas,
 Can bid us feel we keep them in the ghost,
 Partakers of a strife they joyed to share.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

White Wings : A Yachting Romance.

CHAPTER XLVII.

AFTER THE GALE.



acclamation this picture of brisk and busy human life, now visible from the deck of the yacht? We were no longer alone in the world. Over there, around the big black smacks—that looked like so many hens with broods of chickens—swarmed a fleet of fishing-boats; and as rapidly as hands could manage it, both men and women were shaking out the brown nets and securing the glittering silver treasure of the sea. It was a picturesque sight—the stalwart brown-bearded men in their yellow oil-skins and huge boots; the bare-armed women in their scarlet short gowns; the masses of ruddy brown nets; the lowered sails. And then the Laird perceived that he was not alone in regarding this busy and cheerful scene.

Along there by the bulwarks, with one hand on the shrouds and the other on the gig, stood Mary Avon, apparently watching the boats passing to and fro between the smacks and the shore. The Laird went gently up to her, and put his hand on her shoulder. She started, turned

“WELL, indeed!” exclaimed the Laird, on putting his head out next morning. “This is wonderful—wonderful!”

Was it the long imprisonment in the darkness of the equinoctials that made him welcome with so much delight this spectacle of fair skies and sapphire seas, with the waves breaking white in Scalpa Sound, and the sunlight shining along the Coolins? Or was it not rather our long isolation from the ordinary affairs of the world that made him greet with



WE ALL GO OUT TO THE HEADLAND AND WAVE OUR HANKIECHIEFS



round suddenly, and then he saw, to his dismay, that her eyes were full of tears.

"What, what?" said he, with a quick doubt and fear coming over him. Had all his plans failed, then? Was the girl still unhappy?

"What is it, lass? What is the matter?" said he, gripping her hand so as to get the truth from her.

By this time she had dried her eyes.

"Nothing—nothing," said she, rather shamefacedly. "I was only thinking about the song of 'Caller Herring'; and how glad those women must be to find their husbands come back this morning. Fancy their being out on such a night as last night! What it must be to be a fisherman's wife—and alone on shore—"

"Toots, toots, lass!" cried the Laird, with a splendid cheerfulness; for he was greatly relieved that this was all the cause of the wet eyes. "Ye are jist giving way to a sentiment. I have observed that people are apt to be sentimental in the morning, before they get their breakfast. What! are ye peetying these folk? I can tell ye this is a proud day for them, to judge by they heaps o' fish. They are jist as happy as kings; and as for the risk o' their trade, they have to do what is appointed to them. Why, does not that Doctor friend o' yours say that the happiest people are they who are hardest worked?"

This reference to the Doctor silenced the young lady at once.

"Not that I have much right to talk about work," said the Laird, penitently. "I believe I am becoming the idlest crayture on the face of this world."

At this point a very pretty little incident occurred. A boat was passing to the shore; and in the stern of her was a young fisherman—a handsome young fellow, with a sun-tanned face and yellow beard. As they were going by the yacht, he caught a glimpse of Miss Avon; then when they had passed, he said something in Gaelic to his two companions, who immediately rested on their oars. Then he was seen rapidly to fill a tin can with two or three dozen herrings; and his companions backed their boat to the side of the yacht. The young fellow stood up in the stern, and with a shy laugh—but with no speech, for he was doubtless nervous about his English—offered this present to the young lady. She was very much pleased; but she blushed quite as much as he did. And she was confused, for she could not summon Master Fred to take charge of the herrings, seeing this compliment was so directly paid to herself. However, she boldly gripped the tin can, and said, "Oh, thank you very much;" and by this time the Laird had fetched a bucket, into which the glittering beauties were slipped. Then the can was handed back, with further and profuse thanks, and the boat pushed off.

Suddenly, and with great alarm, Miss Avon remembered that Angus had taught her what Highland manners were.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" she called out to the bearded young fisherman, who instantly turned round, and the oars were stopped. "I beg

your pardon," said she, with an extreme and anxious politeness, "but would you take a glass of whisky?"

"No, thank ye, mem," said the fisherman, with another laugh of friendliness on the frank face; and then away they went.

The girl was in despair. She was about to marry a Highlander, and already she had forgotten the first of Highland customs. But unexpected relief was at hand. Hearing something going on, John of Skye had tumbled up from the forecastle, and instantly saw that the young lady was sorely grieved that those friendly fishermen had not accepted this return compliment. He called aloud, in Gaelic, and in a severe tone. The three men came back, looking rather like schoolboys who would fain escape from an embarrassing interview. And then at the same moment Captain John, who had asked Fred to bring up the whisky-bottle, said in a low voice to the young lady—

"They would think it ferry kind, mem, if you would pour out the whisky with your own hand."

And this was done, Miss Mary going through the ceremony without flinching; and as each of the men was handed his glass, he rose up in the boat, and took off his cap, and drank the health of the young lady, in the Gaelic. And Angus Sutherland, when he came on deck, was greatly pleased to hear of what she had done; though the Laird took occasion to remark at breakfast that he hoped it was not a common custom among the young ladies of England to get up early in the morning to have clandestine flirtations with handsome young fishermen.

Then all hands on deck: for now there are two anchors to be got in, and we must not lose any of this pleasant sailing breeze. In these sheltered and shining waters there are scarcely any traces of the recent rough weather, except that the wind still comes in variable puffs, and from all sorts of unexpected directions. In the main, however, it is N. by E., and so we have to set to work to leisurely beat up the Sound of Raasay.

"Well, this is indeed like old times, Mary!" Queen Titania cries, as she comfortably ensconces herself in a camp-chair: for Miss Avon is at the helm, and the young Doctor, lying at full length on the sunlit deck, is watching the sails and criticising her steering; and the Laird is demonstrating to a humble listener the immeasurable advantages enjoyed by the Scotch landscape-painters, in that they have within so small a compass every variety of mountain, lake, woodland, and ocean scenery. He becomes facetious, too, about Miss Mary's sketches. What if he were to have a room set apart for them at Denny-mains, to be called the *White Dove* Gallery? He might have a skilled decorator out from Glasgow to devise the furniture and ornamentation, so that both should suggest the sea, and ships, and sailors.

Here John of Skye comes aft.

"I think," says he to Miss Avon, with a modest smile, "we might put the gaff topsail on her."

"Oh, yes, certainly," says this experienced mariner; and the Doctor, seeing an opportunity for bestirring himself, jumps to his feet.

And so, with the topsail shining white in the sun—a thing we have not seen for some time—we leave behind us the gloomy opening into Loch Sligachan, and beat up through the Raasay narrows, and steal by the pleasant woods of Raasay House. The Laird has returned to that project of the Marine Gallery, and he has secured an attentive listener in the person of his hostess, who prides herself that she has a sure instinct as to what is "right" in mural decoration.

This is indeed like old times come back again. The light, cool breeze, the warm decks, the pleasant lapping of the water, and our steerswoman partly whistling and partly humming—

They'll put a napkin round my e'en,
They'll no let me see to dee;
And they'll never let on to my faither and mither,
But I am awa' o'er the sea.

And this she is abstractedly and contentedly doing, without any notice of the fact that the song is supposed to be a pathetic one.

Then our young Doctor: of what does he discourse to us during this delightful day-dreaming and idleness? Well, it has been remarked by more than one of us that Dr. Angus has become tremendously practical of late. You would scarcely have believed that this was the young F.R.S. who used to startle the good Laird out of his wits by his wild speculations about the origin of the world and similar trifles. Now his whole interest seemed to be centred on the commonest things: all the Commissioners of the Burgh of Strathgovan put together could not have been more fierce than he was about the necessity of supplying houses with pure water, for example. And the abuse that he heaped on the Water Companies of London, more especially, and on the Government which did not interfere, was so distinctly libellous that we were glad no alien overheard it.

Then as to arsenic in wall-paper: he was equally dogmatic and indignant about that; and here it was his hostess, rather than the Laird, who was interested. She eagerly committed to her note-book a recipe for testing the presence of that vile metal in wall-papers or anything else; and some of us had mentally to thank Heaven that she was not likely to get test-tubes, and zinc filings, and hydrochloric acid in Portree. The woman would have blown up the ship.

All this and much more was very different from the kind of conversation that used so seriously to trouble the Laird. When he heard Angus talk with great common sense and abundant information about the various climates that suited particular constitutions, and about the best soils for building houses on, and about the necessity for strict municipal supervision of drainage, he was ready to believe that our young Doctor had not only for his own part never handled that dangerous book,

the *Vestiges of Creation*, but that he had never even known any one who had glanced at its sophistical pages except with a smile of pity. Why, all the time that we were shut up by the equinoctials, the only profound and mysterious thing that Angus had said was this: "There is surely something wrong when the man who takes on himself all the trouble of drawing a bottle of ale is bound to give his friend the first tumbler, which is clear, and keep the second tumbler, which is muddy, for himself." But if you narrowly look into it, you will find that there is really nothing dangerous or unsettling in this saying—no grumbling against the ways of Providence whatsoever. It was mysterious, perhaps; but then so would many of the nice points about the Semple case have been, had we not had with us an able expositor.

And on this occasion, as we were running along for Portree, our F.R.S. was chiefly engaged in warning us against paying too serious heed to certain extreme theories about food and drink which were then being put forward by a number of distinguished physicians.

"For people in good health, the very worst adviser is the doctor," he was saying; when he was gently reminded by his hostess that he must not malign his own calling, or destroy a superstition that might in itself have curative effects.

"Oh, I scarcely call myself a doctor," he said, "for I have no practice as yet. And I am not denying the power of a physician to help nature in certain cases—of course not; but what I say is that for healthy people the doctor is the worst adviser possible. Why, where does he get his experience?—from the study of people who are ill. He lives in an atmosphere of sickness; his conclusions about the human body are drawn from bad specimens; the effects that he sees produced are produced on too sensitive subjects. Very likely, too, if he is himself a distinguished physician, he has gone through an immense amount of training and subsequent hard work; his own system is not of the strongest; and he considers that what he feels to be injurious to him must be injurious to other people. Probably so it might be—to people similarly sensitive; but not necessarily to people in sound health. Fancy a man trying to terrify people by describing the awful appearance produced on one's internal economy when one drinks half a glass of sherry! And that," he added, "is a piece of pure scientific sensationalism; for precisely the same appearance is produced if you drink half a glass of milk."

"I am of opinion," said the Laird, with the gravity befitting such a topic, "that of all steemulants nothing is better or wholersomer than a drop of sound, sterling whiskey."

"And where are you likely to get it?—"

"I can assure ye, at Denny-mains—"

"I mean where are the masses of the people to get it? What they get is a cheap white spirit, reeking with fusel-oil, with just enough whiskey blended to hide the imposture. The decoction is a certain poison. If the Government would stop tinkering at Irish franchises,

and Irish tenures, and Irish Universities, and would pass a law making it penal for any distiller to sell spirits that he has not had in bond for at least two years, they would do a good deal more service to Ireland, and to this country too."

"Still, these measures of amelioration must have their effect," observed the Laird, sententiously. "I would not discourage wise legislation. We will reconcile Ireland sooner or later, if we are prudent and conseederate."

"You may as well give them Home Rule at once," said Dr. Angus, bluntly. "The Irish have no regard for the historical grandeur of England; how could they?—they have lost their organ of veneration. The coronal region of the skull has in time become depressed, through frequent shillelagh practice."

For a second the Laird glanced at him: there was a savour of George Combe about this speech. Could it be that he believed in that monstrous and atheistical theory?

But no. The Laird only laughed; and said:

"I would not like to have an Irishman hear ye say so."

It was now abundantly clear to us that Denny-mains could no longer suspect of anything heterodox and destructive this young man who was sound on drainage, pure air, and a constant supply of water to the tanks.

Of course, we could not get into Portree without Ben Inivaig having a tussle with us. This mountain is the most inveterate brewer of squalls in the whole of the West Highlands, and it is his especial delight to catch the unwary, when all their eyes are bent on the safe harbour within. But we were equal with him. Although he tried to tear our masts out and frighten us out of our senses, all that he really succeeded in doing was to put us to a good deal of trouble and break a tumbler or two below. We pointed the finger of scorn at Ben Inivaig. We sailed past him, and took no more notice of him. With a favouring breeze, and with our topsail still set, we glided into the open and spacious harbour.

But that first look round was a strange one. Was this really Portree Harbour, or were we so many Rip Van Winkles? There were the shining white houses, and the circular bay, and the wooded cliffs; but where were the yachts that used to keep the place so bright and busy? There was not an inch of white canvas visible. We got to anchor near a couple of heavy smacks; the men looked at us as if we had dropped from the skies.

We went ashore and walked up to the telegraph office to see whether the adjacent islands of Great Britain and Ireland—as the Cumbræ minister called them—had survived the equinoctials; and learned only too accurately what serious mischief had been done all along these coasts by the gale. From various points, moreover, we subsequently received congratulations on our escape, until we almost began to believe that we had really been in serious peril. For the rest, our friends at Borva were safe enough; they had not been on board their yacht at all.

That evening, in the silent and deserted bay, a council of war was held on deck. We were not, as it turned out, quite alone; there had also come in a steam-yacht, the master of which informed our John of Skye that such a gale he had not seen for three-and-twenty years. He also told us that there was a heavy sea running in the Minch; and that no vessel would try to cross. Stornoway Harbour, we already knew, was filled with storm-stayed craft. So we had to decide.

Like the very small and white-faced boy who stood forth to declaim before a school full of examiners and friends, and who raised his hand, and announced in a trembling falsetto that his voice was still for war, it was the women who spoke first, and they were for going right on the next morning.

"Mind," said Angus Sutherland, looking anxiously at certain dark eyes; "there is generally a good sea in the Minch in the best of weathers; but after a three or four days' gale—well—"

"I, for one, don't care," said Miss Avon, frankly regarding him.

"And I should like it," said the other woman, "so long as there is plenty of wind. But if Captain John takes me out into the middle of the Minch and keeps me rolling about on the Atlantic in a dead calm, then something will befall him that his mother knew nothing about."

Here Captain John was emboldened to step forward, and to say, with an embarrassed politeness—

"I not afraid of anything for the leddies; for two better sailors I never sah ahl my life long."

However, the final result of our confabulation that night was the resolve to get under way next morning, and proceed a certain distance until we should discover what the weather was like outside. With a fair wind, we might run the sixty miles to Stornoway before night; without a fair wind, there was little use in our adventuring out to be knocked about in the North Minch, where the Atlantic finds itself jammed into the neck of a bottle, and rebels in a somewhat frantic fashion. We must do our good friends in Portree the justice to say that they endeavoured to dissuade us; but then we had sailed in the *White Dove* before, and had no great fear of her leading us into any trouble.

And so, good-night!—good-night! We can scarcely believe that this is Portree Harbour, so still and quiet it is. All the summer fleet of vessels have fled; the year is gone with them; soon we, too, must betake ourselves to the south. Good-night!—good-night! The peace of the darkness falls over us; if there is any sound, it is the sound of singing in our dreams.



CHAPTER XLVIII.

"A GOOD ONE FOR THE LAST."

"AH, well, well," said the Laird, somewhat sadly, to his hostess, "I suppose we may now conseedter that we have started on our last day's sailing in the *White Dove*?"

"I suppose so," said she; and this was before breakfast, so she may have been inclined to be a bit sentimental too.

"I'm thinking," said he, "that some of us may hereafter look back on this sailing as the longest and grandest holiday of their life, and will recall the name of the *White Dove* with a certain amount of affection. I, for one, feel that I can scarcely justify myself for withdrawing so long from the duties that society demands from every man; and no doubt there will be much to set right when one goes back to Strathgovan. But perhaps one has been able to do something even in one's idleness——"

He paused here, and remained silent for a moment or two.

"What a fine thing," he continued, "it must be for a doctor to watch the return of health to a patient's face—to watch the colour coming back, and the eyes looking happy again, and the spirits rising; and to think that maybe he has helped. And if he happens to know the patient, and to be as anxious about her as if she were his own child, do not ye think he must be a proud man when he sees the results of what he has done for her, and when he hears her begin to laugh again?"

Despite the Laird's profound ingenuity, we knew very well who that doctor was. And we had learned something about the affection which this mythical physician had acquired for this imaginary patient.

"What a sersitive bit crayture she is!" said he, suddenly, as if he were now talking of some quite different person. "Have ye seen the difference the last few days have made on her face—have ye not observed it?"

"Yes, indeed I have."

"Ye would imagine that her face was just singing a song from the morning till the night—I have never seen any one with such expressive eyes as that bit lass has—and—and—it is fairly a pleasure to any one to look at the happiness of them."

"Which she owes to you, sir?"

"To me?" said the Laird. "Dear me!—not to me. It was a fortunate circumstance that I was with ye on board the yacht, that is all. What I did no man who had the chance could have refused to do. No, no; if the lass owes any gratitude to anybody or anything, it is to the Semple case."

"What?"

"Just so, ma'am," said the Laird composedly. "I will confess to ye that a long holiday spent in sailing had not that attraction for me it might

have had for others—though I think I have come to enjoy it now with the best of ye ; but I thought, when ye pressed me to come, that it would be a grand opportunity to get your husband to take up the Semple case, and master it thoroughly, and put its merits in a just manner before the public. That he does not appear to be as much interested in it as I had reason to expect is a misfortune—perhaps he will grow to see the importance of the principles involved in it in time ; but I have ceased to force it on his attention. In the meanwhile we have had a fine, long holiday, which has at least given me leisure to consider many schemes for the advantage of my brother pareeshioners. Ay ; and where is Miss Mary, though ? ”

“ She and Angus have been up for hours, I believe,” said his hostess. “ I heard them on deck before we started anyway.”

“ I would not disturb them,” said the Laird, with much consideration. “ They have plenty to talk about—all their life opening up before them—like a road through a garden, as one might say. And whatever befalls them hereafter I suppose they will always remember the present time as the most beautiful of their existence—the wonder of it, the newness, the hope. It is a strange thing that. Ye know, ma'am, that our garden at Denny-mains, if I may say so, is far from insigneficant. It has been greatly commended by experienced landscape gardeners. Well, now, that garden, when it is just at its fullest of summer colour—with all its dahlias and hollyhocks and what-not—I say ye cannot get half as much delight from the whole show as ye get from the first glint o' a primrose, as ye are walking through a wood, on a bleak March day, and not expecting to see anything of the kind. Does not that make your heart jump ? ”

Here the Laird had to make way for Master Fred and the breakfast-tray.

“ There is not a bairn about Strathgovan,” he continued, with a laugh, “ knows better than myself where to find the first primroses and blue-bells and the red dead-nettle, ye know, and so on. Would ye believe it, that poor crayture Johnnie Guthrie was for cutting down the hedge in the Coulterburn Road, and putting up a stone dyke ! ” Here the Laird’s face grew more and more stern, and he spoke with unnecessary vehemence. “ I make bold to say that the man who would cut down a hawthorn hedge where the children go to gather their bits o’ flowers, and would put in its place a stone wall for no reason on the face of the earth, I say that man is an ass—an intolerable and pernicious ass ! ”

But this fierceness instantly vanished, for here was Mary Avon come in to bid him good morning. And he rose and took both her hands in his and regarded the upturned smiling face and the speaking eyes.

“ Ay, ay, lass,” said he, with great satisfaction and approval, “ ye have got the roses into your cheeks at last. That is the morning air—the ‘ roses weet wi’ dew ’—it is a fine habit that of early rising. Dear me, what a shilpit bit thing ye were when I first saw ye about three months

ago! And now I dare say ye are just as hungry as a hawk with walking up and down the deck in the sea-air—we will not keep ye waiting a moment."

The Laird got her a chair, next his own of course; and then rang Master Fred's bell violently.

"How's her head, skipper?" said Queen T., when the young Doctor made his appearance—he had roses, too, in his cheeks, freshened by the morning air.

"Well," said he frankly, as he sat down, "I think it would be judicious to have breakfast over as soon as possible, and get the things stowed away. We are flying up the Sound of Raasay like a witch on a broom; and there will be a roaring sea when we get beyond the shelter of Skye."

"We have been in roaring seas before," said she, confidently.

"We met a schooner coming into Portree Harbour this morning," said he, with a dry smile. "She left yesterday afternoon just before we got in. They were at it all night, but had to run back at last. They said they had got quite enough of it."

This was a little more serious, but the women were not to be daunted. They had come to believe in the *White Dove* being capable of anything, especially when a certain aid to John of Skye was on board. For the rest, the news was that the day was lovely, the wind fair for Stornoway, and the yacht flying northward like an arrow.

There was a certain solemnity, nevertheless, or perhaps only an unusual elaborateness, about our preparations before going on deck. Gun-cases were wedged in in front of canvases, so that Miss Avon's sketches should not go rolling on to the floor; all such outlying skirmishers as candlesticks, aneroids, draught-boards, and the like were moved to the rear of compact masses of rugs; and then the women were ordered to array themselves in their waterproofs. Waterproofs?—and the sun flooding through the skylight. But they obeyed.

Certainly there did not seem to be any great need for waterproofs when we got above, and had the women placed in a secure corner of the companion-way. It was a brilliant, breezy, blue-skied morning, with the decks as yet quite white and dry, and with the long mountainous line of Skye shining in the sun. The yacht was flying along at a famous pace before a fresh and steady breeze; already we could make out, far away on the northern horizon, a pale, low, faint-blue line, which we knew to be the hills of southern Lewis. Of course, one had to observe that the vast expanse of sea lying between us and that far line was of a stormy black; moreover, the men had got on their oilskins, though not a drop of spray was coming on board.

As we spun along, however, before the freshening wind, the crashes of the waves at the bows became somewhat more heavy, and occasionally some jets of white foam would spring up into the sunlight. When it was suggested to Captain John that he might set the gaff topsail, he very

respectfully and shyly shook his head. For one thing, it was rather strange that on this wide expanse of sea not a solitary vessel was visible.

Further and further northward. And now one has to look out for the white water springing over the bows, and there is a general ducking of heads when the crash forward gives warning. The decks are beginning to glisten now ; and Miss Avon has received one sharp admonition to be more careful, which has somewhat damped and disarranged her hair. And so the *White Dove* still flies to the north—like an arrow—like a witch on a broom—like a hare, only that none of these things would groan so much in getting into the deep troughs of the sea ; and not even a witch on a broom could perform such capers in the way of tumbling and tossing, and pitching and rolling.

However, all this was mere child's play. We knew very well when and where we should really "get it" : and we got it. Once out of the shelter of the Skye coast, we found a considerably heavy sea swinging along the Minch, and the wind was still freshening up, insomuch that Captain John had to take the mizen and foresail off her. How splendidly those mountain-masses of waves came heaving along—apparently quite black until they came near, and then we could see the sunlight shining green through the breaking crest ; then there was a shock at the bows that caused the yacht to shiver from stem to stern ; then a high springing into the air, followed by a heavy rattle and rush on the decks. The scuppers were of no use at all ; there was a foot and a half of hissing and seething salt water all along the lee bulwarks, and when the gangway was lifted to let it out the next rolling wave only spouted an equal quantity up on deck, soaking Dr. Angus Sutherland to the shoulder. Then a heavier sea than usual struck her, carrying off the cover of the fore-hatch and sending it spinning aft ; while, at the same moment, a voice from the forecastle informed Captain John in an injured tone that this last invader had swamped the men's berths. What could he do but have the main tack hauled up to lighten the pressure of the wind ? The waters of the Minch, when once they rise, are not to be stilled by a bottle of salad oil.

We had never before seen the ordinarily buoyant *White Dove* take in such masses of water over her bows ; but we soon got accustomed to the seething lake of water along the lee scuppers, and allowed it to subside or increase as it liked. And the women were now seated a step lower on the companion-way, so that the rags of the waves flew by them without touching them ; and there was a good deal of laughing and jesting going on at the clinging and stumbling of any unfortunate person who had to make his way along the deck. As for our indefatigable Doctor, his face had been running wet with salt water for hours ; twice he had slipped and gone headlong to leeward ; and now, with a rope double twisted round the tiller, he was steering, his teeth set hard.

"Well, Mary," shrieked Queen Titania into her companion's ear.
"We are having a good one for the last!"

"Is he going up the mast?" cried the girl, in great alarm.

"I say we are having a good one for the last!"

"Oh, yes!" was the shout in reply. "She is indeed going fast."

But about mid-day we passed within a few miles to the east of the Shiant Islands, and here the sea was somewhat moderated, so we tumbled below for a snack of lunch. The women wanted to devote the time to dressing their hair and adorning themselves anew; but purser Sutherland objected to this altogether. He compelled them to eat and drink while that was possible; and several toasts were proposed—briefly, but with much enthusiasm. Then we scrambled on deck again. We found that John had hoisted his foresail again, but he had let the mizen alone.

Northward and ever northward—and we are all alone on this wide, wide sea. But that pale line of coast at the horizon is beginning to resolve itself into definite form—into long, low headlands, some of which are dark in shadow, others shining in the sun. And then the cloud-like mountains beyond: can these be the far Suainabhal and Meala-sabhal, and the other giants that look down on Loch Roag and the western shores? They seem to belong to a world beyond the sea.

Northward and ever northward; and there is less water coming over now, and less groaning and plunging, so that one can hear oneself speak. And what is this wagering on the part of the Doctor that we shall do the sixty miles between Portree and Stornoway within the six hours? John of Skye shakes his head; but he has the main tack hauled down.

Then, as the day wears on, behold! a small white object in that line of blue. The cry goes abroad: it is Stornoway light!

"Come, now, John!" the Doctor calls aloud; "within the six hours—for a glass of whisky and a lucky sixpence!"

"We not at Styornaway light yet," answered the prudent John of Skye, who is no gambler. But all the same, he called two of the men aft to set the mizen again; and as for himself, he threw off his oil-skins and appeared in his proud uniform once more. This looked like business.

Well, it was not within the six hours, but it was within the six hours and a half, that we sailed past Stornoway lighthouse and its outstanding perch; and past a floating target with a red flag, for artillery practice; and past a barque which had been driven ashore two days before, and now stuck there, with her back broken. And this was a wonderful sight—after the lone, wide seas—to see such a mass of ships of all sorts and sizes crowded in here for fear of the weather. We read their names in the strange foreign type as we passed—*Die Heimath*, *Georg Washington*, *Friedrich der Grosse*, and the like—and we saw the yellow-haired Norsemen pulling between the vessels in their odd-looking double-bowed boats. And was not John of Skye a proud man that day, as he stood by the tiller in his splendour of blue and brass buttons, knowing that he had brought the *White Dove* across the wild waters of the

Minch, when not one of these foreigners would put his nose outside the harbour?

The evening light was shining over the quiet town, and the shadowed castle, and the fir-tipped circle of hills, when the *White Dove* rattled out her anchor-chain and came to rest. And as this was our last night on board, there was a good deal of packing and other trouble. It was nearly ten o'clock when we came together again.

The Laird was in excellent spirits that night, and was more than ordinarily facetious; but his hostess refused to be comforted. A thousand Homeshes could not have called up a smile. For she had grown to love this scrambling life on board; and she had acquired a great affection for the yacht itself; and now she looked round this old and familiar saloon, in which we had spent so many snug and merry evenings together; and she knew she was looking at it for the last time.

At length, however, the Laird bethought himself of arousing her from her sentimental sadness, and set to work to joke her out of it. He told her she was behaving like a schoolgirl come to the end of her holiday. Well, she only further behaved like a schoolgirl by letting her lips begin to tremble; and then she stealthily withdrew to her own cabin, and doubtless had a good cry there. There was no help for it, however: the child had to give up its plaything at last.

CHAPTER XLIX.

ADIEU !

NEXT morning, also: why should this tender melancholy still dwell in the soft and mournful eyes? The sunlight was shining cheerfully on the sweep of wooded hill, on the grey castle, on the scattered town, and on the busy quays. Busy was scarcely the word: there was a wild excitement abroad, for a vast take of herring had just been brought in. There, close in by the quays, were the splendidly-built luggers, with their masts right at their bows; and standing up in them their stalwart crews, bronze-faced, heavy-bearded, with oil-skin caps, and boots up to their thighs. Then on the quays above the picturesquely-costumed women busy at the salting; and agents eagerly chaffering with the men; and empty barrels coming down in unknown quantities. Bustle, life, excitement pervaded the whole town; but our tender-hearted hostess, as we got ashore, seemed to pay no heed to it. As she bade good-bye to the men, shaking hands with each, there were tears in her eyes; if she had wished to cast a last glance in the direction of the *White Dove*, she could scarcely have seen the now still and motionless craft.

But by-and-by, when we had left our heavier luggage at the inn, and when we set out to drive across the island to visit some friends of ours who live on the western side, she grew somewhat more cheerful. Here

and there a whiff of the fragrant peat-smoke caught us as we passed, bringing back recollections of other days. Then she had one or two strangers to inform and instruct; and she was glad that Mary Avon had a bright day for her drive across the Lewis.

"But what a desolate place it must be on a wet day!" that young person remarked, as she looked away across the undulating moors, vast, and lonely, and silent.

Now, at all events, the drive was pleasant enough: for the sunlight brought out the soft ruddy browns of the bog-land, and ever and again the blue and white surface of a small loch flashed back the daylight from amid that desolation. Then occasionally the road crossed a brawling stream, and the sound of it was grateful enough in the oppressive silence. In due course of time we reached Garra-na-hina.

Our stay at the comfortable little hostelry was but brief, for the boat to be sent by our friends had not arrived, and it was proposed that in the meantime we should walk along the coast to show our companions the famous stones of Callernish. By this time Queen Titania had quite recovered her spirits, and eagerly assented, saying how pleasant a walk would be after our long confinement on shipboard.

It was indeed a pleasant walk, through a bright and cheerful piece of country. And as we went along we sometimes turned to look around us—at the waters of the Black River, a winding line of silver through the yellow and brown of the morass; and at the placid blue waters of Loch Roag, with the orange line of sea-weed round the rocks; and at the far blue bulk of Suainabhal. We did not walk very fast; and indeed we had not got anywhere near the Callernish stones, when the sharp eye of our young Doctor caught sight of two new objects that had come into this shining picture. The first was a large brown boat, rowed by four fishermen; the second was a long and shapely boat—like the pinnace of a yacht—also pulled by four men, in blue jerseys and scarlet caps. There was no one in the stern of the big boat; but in the stern of the gig were three figures, as far as we could make out.

Now no sooner had our attention been called to the two boats which had just come round the point of an island out there, than our good Queen Titania became greatly excited, and would have us all go out to the top of a small headland and frantically wave our handkerchiefs there. Then we perceived that the second boat instantly changed its course, and was being steered for the point on which we stood. We descended to the shore and went out on to some rocks, Queen Titania becoming quite hysterical.

"Oh, how kind of her! how kind of her!" she cried.

For it now appeared that these three figures in the stern of the white pinnace were the figures of a young lady, who was obviously steering, and of two small boys, one on each side of her, and both dressed as young sailors. And the steerswoman—she had something of a sailor-look about her, too; for she was dressed in navy-blue; and she wore a

straw hat with a blue ribbon and letters of gold. But you would scarcely have looked at the smart straw hat when you saw the bright and laughing face, and the beautiful eyes that seemed to speak to you long before she could get to shore. And then the boat was run into a small creek; and the young lady stepped lightly out—she certainly was young-looking, by the way, to be the mother of those two small sailors—and she quickly and eagerly and gladly caught Queen Titania with both her hands.

"Oh, indeed I beg your pardon," said she—and her speech was exceedingly pleasant to hear—"but I did not think you could be so soon over from Styornaway."

[*Note by Queen Titania.*—It appears that now all our voyaging is over, and we are about to retire into privacy again, I am expected, as on a previous occasion, to come forward and address to you a kind of epilogue, just as they do on the stage. This seems to me a sort of strange performance at the end of a yachting cruise; for what if a handful of salt water were to come over the bows, and put out my trumpery foot-lights? However, what must be must, as married women know; and so I would first of all say a word to the many kind people who were so *very* good to us in these distant places in the north. You may think it strange to associate such things as fresh vegetables, or a basket of flowers, or a chicken, or a bottle of milk, or even a bunch of white heather, with sentiment; but people who have been sailing in the West Highlands do not think so—indeed, they know which is the most obliging and friendly and hospitable place in the *whole world*. And then a word to the reader. If I might hope that it is the same reader who has been with us in other climes in other years—who may have driven with us along the devious English lanes; and crossed the Atlantic, and seen the big cañons of the Rocky Mountains; and lived with us among those dear old people in the Black Forest; and walked with us on Mickleham Downs in the starlight, why, then, he may forgive us for taking him on such a tremendous long holiday in these Scotch lochs. But we hope that if ever he goes into these wilds for himself, he will get as good a skipper as John of Skye, and have as pleasant and *true* a friend on board as the Laird of Denny-mains. Perhaps, I may add, just to explain everything, that we are all invited to Denny-mains to spend Christmas; and something is going to happen there; and the Laird says that so far from objecting to a ceremony in the Episcopal church, he will himself be present and give away the bride. It is even hinted that Mr. Tom Galbraith may come from Edinburgh, as a great compliment; and then no doubt we shall all be introduced to him. And so—Good-bye!—Good-bye!—and another message—from the heart—to all the kind people who befriended us in those places far away!—T.]

THE END.

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